The Morals of Marriage

"I abhor and condemn any sinful interference with the role of parenthood."

PLEDGE TO *Christian Marriage.*

LESSON VI

VI

THE MORALS OF MARRIAGE

THE TITLE of this lesson could be misleading. Every aspect of marriage has its moral problems. Family quarrels, the question of mutual trust and forgiveness, the use of the family income, the care of the children—in these and scores of other things there are questions of right and wrong; therefore moral problems. Nevertheless, the problems that are most commonly perplexing, most apt to cause anxiety, are those that pertain to the use of marriage rights through intimate love-making and sexual intercourse. The present chapter will be limited to these special problems. Our purpose here is to consider the ordinary questions concerning the physical side of marriage that might confront an earnest young married couple and to give clear answers to these questions.

It may be said at the beginning that it is very difficult to take these questions one by one and give a satisfactory answer to each of them, because sometimes the answer to one problem is clear only when it is considered in relation to other problems. In other words, the answers are somewhat like the various parts of a puzzle: one sees the full meaning of one part only when the whole pattern is assembled. Nevertheless, for our purpose of practical explanation, we can divide this chapter into five sections: 1. The importance and moral dignity of sexual intimacy in marriage. 2. The privileges acquired by the marriage contract. 3. The mutual duties of husband and wife towards each other. 4. Artificial birth control. 5. The use of rhythm. This division may sound rather mechanical; but following it will make for practicality and clarity.

1. THE IMPORTANCE AND MORAL DIGNITY OF SEXUAL INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

In his encyclical on Christian Marriage, Pope Pius XI refers to sexual intercourse between husband and wife by the simple, but expressive, term *opus coniugii*—"the conjugal act," "the marital act." His use of this expression was not something new. Theologians have

constantly referred to sexual intercourse as "the marital act," and the conscientious laity almost spontaneously use the same expression.

The Marriage Right. There are good reasons why Popes, theologians, and laity should refer to sexual intercourse as *the* marital act. The right to this act, as we have seen, is the essential object of the marriage contract. The groom gives this right to his bride—to her exclusively and forever; and she gives it to him in the same way. The possession of this right makes the marriage contract different from all other contracts and married life different from all other companionships. Moreover, the actual use of the right is closely connected with all the purposes of marriage itself. Sexual intercourse is the only way of providing for the procreation of children; it is the principal way of safeguarding conjugal chastity and fostering conjugal love; and by fostering love it helps to preserve the harmony between parents which is required for the proper rearing of children.

Moral Values of Intercourse. From the foregoing one can readily appreciate both the importance and the moral dignity of sexual intercourse in marriage. It is a *procreative* act by which husband and wife place the necessary condition for parenthood. It is an act of *justice,* by which each fulfills a sacred promise to the other; an act of *love* by which their own union is deepened and made more secure and through which they preserve the harmony requisite for caring for their children. Finally, it may also be called an act of *chastity* (though this is perhaps an unusual manner of speaking) because by the moderate use of their right to intercourse they satisfy their legitimate sexual desires and thus protect themselves from temptations against chastity.

These high moral values apply principally to sexual intercourse itself; but not exclusively. They are found also in the lesser intimacies such as kissing, caressing, and fondling—all of which may be included here under the general term, love-making.

2. The Privileges Acquired by the Marriage Contract

At the beginning of his discourse on the moral problems of married life (October 29, 1951), Pope Pius XII referred to "the marvelous cooperation between parents, nature, and God, which gives to the light a new human being made to the Creator's image and likeness." Indeed the cooperation is marvelous. God Himself creates the soul; nature (which is merely God's instrument) fashions the body by an almost incredible series of wonders; and the parents place the necessary condition for these wonders by having natural sexual intercourse.

Natural intercourse includes two elements: the union of penis and vagina and the ejaculation of the male seminal fluids within the vagina. The right to such intercourse is the primary right acquired through the marriage contract. Moreover, both physiology and psychology teach us that the normal preliminary to sexual intercourse is intimate love-making because this is ordinarily necessary for preparing the organs for union. Consequently, love-making as a preparation for intercourse is certainly included in the right to intercourse. Finally, both common sense and Christian tradition teach us that husband and wife should live together on the closest terms, e.g., sharing the same room, even the same bed, and so forth, and this obviously supposes the right to bodily intimacies even at times when they do not intend to have intercourse.

What is Permissible. Intercourse, love-making as a preparation for intercourse, and love-making apart from intercourse—these are the special and exclusive privileges of husband and wife. Do these privileges have any limit? They do have. As we saw in the first section, intercourse and love-making are designed to serve the same purposes as marriage itself: procreation, the fostering of mutual love, and protection against incontinence. Hence this general rule may be stated: what is in conformity with these purposes is good and permissible, as well as a source of supernatural merit for those who are in the state of grace; and what is in opposition to any of these purposes is sinful. This general rule may be of more practical value if it is reduced to three negative points: namely— (a) do nothing to prevent conception; (b) avoid voluntary orgasm outside of intercourse, and (c) do nothing which causes the other party unnecessary pain or repugnance. If both husband and wife carefully observe these points, their mutual sexual conduct will be sinless and in conformity with its God-given purposes.

The first of these three points will be explained in the section on artificial birth control. Some further remarks are necessary in order that the other two points should be clearly understood.

Orgasm Dissociated from Intercourse. By the sexual orgasm is meant the climax of neural, muscular, and glandular processes that take place in the reproductive organs when they are stimulated. In a man it is normally accompanied by the ejaculation of the seminal fluids; in a woman there is no such definite physical sign, and perhaps the best sign is complete satisfaction. Of its nature, since it means a complete sexual act, the orgasm should be had only in intercourse. Hence,

when they intend to have intercourse, husband and wife should see to it that intercourse itself begins before either has reached orgasm; and when they do not intend to have intercourse their intimacies should be sufficiently restrained to avoid bringing either of them to the verge of orgasm—that is, to such a degree of excitement that the restraining of orgasm is a practical impossibility. In fact, just from the psychological point of view, love-making outside the times for intercourse should not be so intense as to strongly excite the passions because, when strongly-excited passions are left unsatisfied, one is apt to be tense and irritable; and this is certainly not the desired goal of conjugal intimacy.

Some Practical Situations. The question of orgasm outside of intercourse would not be completely understood without considering it in the light of some practical situations that may confront married people. For instance, it is psychologically desirable that husband and wife achieve their orgasms simultaneously. Nevertheless, in the early months of marriage—and perhaps much longer than that—it may happen that the wife has not yet reached her climax when the husband reaches his. In this case, when the semen has been properly deposited in the vagina, it is morally permissible and psychologically advisable to continue the stimulation of the wife until her orgasm is achieved. Orgasm thus induced is really a part of the intercourse, and not outside of it.

Involuntary Orgasm. In phrasing our second caution we purposely use the word "voluntary" because we have in mind situations in which orgasm occurs outside of intercourse even though neither husband nor wife intends or wants it. In such cases the orgasm is not voluntary and there is no moral fault. The husband particularly might experience this difficulty during the early months of marriage, but gradually the difficulty should disappear, and if it does not a doctor should be consulted. One should not be surprised, however, if unintentional orgasm occurs occasionally even after some years of married life, especially during love-making at times when intercourse should not be had (for example, for some weeks before and after childbirth). Here too there is no sin, provided the orgasm is sincerely not wanted and that no imprudent risk is taken. It is not easy to define just what is imprudence in this matter because personalities and situations differ greatly. However, once the initial adjustment of marriage is made, a fairly good practical rule for sincerity and prudence is this: when an unintended orgasm happens only occasionally, this is a good sign that it was sincerely not wanted and that there was

no imprudent risk; but when it happens frequently in the same circumstances, this may very likely indicate that a really sincere desire to avoid it is lacking and that one is acting imprudently by not practicing greater restraint.

Causing Unnecessary Pain or Repugnance. A word about the third point: each should avoid causing the other unnecessary pain or repugnance. It is possible that for a short time after marriage intercourse might be painful, especially to the bride. Premarital consultation with a good doctor can prevent this to a great extent, if not entirely. And, when it cannot be prevented entirely, mutual considerations can diminish it until the proper adjustment is made. Also, at the beginning of marriage, and especially in the case of those who have led very chaste lives, even the ordinary intimacies may cause some repugnance. Here again mutual considerations will solve the problem and the repugnance will disappear. In these cases neither pain nor repugnance is caused unnecessarily.

But aside from these ordinary problems, it is well for married people to realize that people differ greatly in their ways of expressing their love and that what pleases one might be distasteful to the other; also that men ordinarily differ greatly from women in their sexual reactions. Some mutual compromise may be needed here. Certainly one who refuses to make such a compromise and who, through the seeking of physical pleasure more than the expression of real affection, would insist on methods of love-making that offend the delicate sensibilities of the other, would be uncharitable and would be using marital privileges contrary to their purpose of fostering mutual love.

Thought and Desire. Thus far we have spoken only of external conduct. But it is natural that husband and wife will also think of their privileges, that they will look forward to intercourse with pleasure, think about it afterwards with pleasure, and so forth. Such thoughts and desires of each other are part of married life. Like love-making outside of intercourse they further the purpose of marriage by fostering their mutual love; hence, they are permitted on the condition that one does not dwell on them to the extent of risking an orgasm.

Just how sinful is the failure to observe the cautions explained in this section? The one clear point is that fully deliberate orgasm outside of intercourse, like artificial birth prevention, is a serious sin. Imprudence in rashly permitting the danger of orgasm and inconsiderateness of one's partner depend much on the circumstances. Gross

imprudence which practically amounts to wanting orgasm and inconsiderateness which deeply hurts the partner would be serious; aside from these cases, the sins would be venial.

3. The Mutual Duties of Husband and Wife Towards Each Other

The last section outlined the privileges husband and wife may use if they wish. A further question concerns their *obligation* to use these privileges; and this may be considered from the point of view of their duty to each other or of their duty to society. In this section we shall consider the duty to each other.

The Obligation of Fidelity. The first mutual duty of husband and wife is fidelity. The privileges of marital intimacy are exclusively their own; to indulge in these intimacies with others is a serious violation of the marriage contract—the sin of adultery, which includes a violation of both chastity and justice.

Duty Involved in the Marriage Right. As for their duty to grant these privileges to each other, young couples who are deeply and tenderly in love might be inclined to say that love itself will take care of this. To some extent this is true because genuine conjugal love is considerate and self-giving. Nevertheless, through the inspired words of St. Paul, God Himself has seen fit to warn married people of their mutual duty, and it would be unwise not to consider it. "Let the husband render to the wife her due," said St. Paul, "and likewise the wife to the husband. The wife has not authority over her body, but the husband; the husband likewise has not authority over his body, but the wife. Do not deprive each other, except perhaps by consent, for a time, that you may give yourselves to prayer . . ." (I Cor. 7:3-5).

An Obligation in Justice. This Scripture text refers to a duty in strict justice that both husband and wife assume when they contract marriage. As regards intercourse, a simple formula for the fulfilment of this duty is that each is strictly obliged to grant the other's reasonable and serious requests. The rule is easily formulated; but it is not always easily applied because many circumstances have to be considered in determining when a request is really serious and completely reasonable. To a great extent, the interpretation of these factors must be left to the prudent judgment of the married parties. This is especially true regarding the seriousness of a request. Their own intimate knowledge of each other will indicate when a request is really

serious, when it is more or less playful, and when it is more a suggestion than a request.

A serious request for intercourse is certainly reasonable when it is made, for example, by a husband who is considerate of his wife and moderate in his demands, and at a time when she could easily grant it. To refuse such a request even once would be a grave violation of the marriage contract. But when requests are fairly frequent, an occasional refusal would hardly be grave unless it would expose the other party to the imminent danger of sinning against chastity.

When is Request Unreasonable? A request is unreasonable when it is made at a time when it would be extraordinarily difficult or even sinful to grant it: for example, when one is seriously ill; when there would be danger to a child in the womb; when there would be a real danger of incurring an infection; when the one who makes the request is grossly intoxicated or intends to practice contraception. These are clear cases of unreasonable requests. Not only would there be no sin in refusing them, but in some cases refusal would be obligatory.

Seek a Happy Compromise. Between these clear extremes of reasonableness and unreasonableness there are many situations in which there may be a little unreasonableness in the request, as well as a little unreasonableness in the refusal. To appreciate what we mean one must recall that the marriage debt is not exactly the same as other debts. A wife certainly cannot excuse herself from paying the grocery bill simply because she feels irritable; feelings make absolutely no difference in paying such debts. But feelings do play a part in marital relations. And, though a wife who feels somewhat indisposed or irritable is not completely justified in refusing intercourse, yet the husband is hardly justified in simply urging his right without regard for her feelings. In a case like this, mutual considerateness should bring about a happy compromise.

Infidelity and the Marriage Right. Another difficult case concerns infidelity. A faithful spouse has the right to refuse intercourse permanently to one who has committed adultery, and even to separate. Yet, though justice allows separation and refusal, this would seldom be the perfect solution to the problem. Certainly there are many cases in which charity would dictate forgiveness and the continuance of normal married life, even though this would be very difficult emotionally.

The Obligation of Love-Making. What we have said about the duty of granting requests for intercourse applies also, with due proportion, to love-making outside of intercourse. Since each party has a right to this in moderation, the other has a duty to acquiesce and cooperate and not to create a barrier to this ordinary means of expressing and fostering affection. Moreover, as regards both intercourse and love-making, even when no requests are made, charity suggests that each should try to anticipate the other's wishes, especially when shyness is probably the reason why a request is not made.

Absence from Home. A last word in this section concerns absence. Sometimes absence is a necessity, as when the husband has to work away from home. But apart from these cases of necessity, absences should not be frequent or prolonged or without mutual agreement.

4. Artificial Birth Control

The Case of Onan. The Book of Genesis (38: 8-10) tells us that Onan, the son of Judah, interrupted the marital act and "spilled his seed upon the ground . . . and therefore the Lord slew him, because he did a detestable thing." Some non-Catholic writers think that Onan was slain because he refused to fulfill the Levirate Law—a Jewish law according to which, if a man died without offspring, his brother or next-of-kin was supposed to marry the widow and raise up children for the deceased brother. But not all non-Catholic writers say this. And the Catholic Church says that the detestable thing for which the Lord slew Onan was the spilling of his seed upon the ground.

Means of Artificial Birth Control. Onan's act was very likely the oldest form of artificial birth control. Today science offers many varieties of the same detestable thing. There are instruments to prevent the natural completion of the marriage act, chemicals to kill the sperm cells, instruments to prevent the union of the sperm and ovum, surgical operations and other treatments to induce sterility. It is highly desirable that all people correctly understand the teaching of the Catholic Church regarding these things; and it is very necessary for all Catholics who marry and all non-Catholics who marry Catholics to know this teaching.

The Teaching of the Church. The official teaching of the Catholic Church regarding all methods of artificial birth prevention is perfectly clear and absolutely final. She teaches that such birth control is contrary not only to the revealed word of God (as in the story of

Onan) but also to the law of nature itself. This law applies to all people, at all times, and in all circumstances. It is not simply a law made by the Church which she can change (e.g., the law of the Eucharistic fast) or from which she can dispense (e.g., the laws of fast and abstinence). There can be no question of a dispensation, or of a change, or of a permission. As Pope Pius XII said, after repeating the teaching of his predecessor that contraceptive practices are intrinsically evil: "This precept is as valid today as it was yesterday, and it will be the same tomorrow and always, because it does not imply a precept of human law but is the expression of a law which is natural and divine."

The Words of the Marriage Encyclical. Let us develop this point a little more completely because it is of the greatest importance. In the encyclical on *Christian Marriage* Pope Pius XI spoke with the greatest sympathy of the difficulties of married people; yet he insisted that no difficulty, howsoever grave, can justify contraception because, since it is contrary to the purpose of the generative act and the generative faculty, it is intrinsically evil. Then in one solemn paragraph he stated what always was, what is, and what always will be the teaching of the Catholic Church on this matter. It would be well for every Catholic husband and wife to memorize this paragraph. It runs as follows:

> Since, therefore, openly departing from the uninterrupted Christian tradition some recently have judged it possible solemnly to declare another doctrine regarding this question, The Catholic Church, to whom God has entrusted the defense of the integrity and purity of morals, standing erect in the midst of the moral ruin which surrounds her, in order that she may preserve the chastity of the nuptial union from being defiled by this foul stain, raises her voice in token of her divine ambassadorship and through Our mouth proclaims anew: any use whatsoever of matrimony exercised in such a way that the act is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life is an offense against the law of God and of nature, and those who indulge in such are branded with the guilt of a grave sin.

A Hard Saying. This teaching of the Catholic Church on artificial birth prevention is no doubt "a hard saying." In some situations of married life the temptation to resort to such birth control is very strong, and the constant resisting of the temptation is genuine heroism. But the heroism is required, just as it is required of the martyrs who face the alternative of denying their faith or enduring torture and death. No priest, no bishop, no Pope could tell these martyrs that

it is all right to deny Christ just this one time; and no priest, no bishop, no Pope can tell any person, Catholic or non-Catholic, that it is all right to practice artificial birth prevention just once. All that they can say is that it is never permitted, no matter how pathetic the circumstances; but if living up to this law of God requires heroism, then God Himself will give the necessary grace to all who are willing to do their part.

When One Party Is "Sinned Against." A very tragic situation arises in married life when one party insists on practicing contraception against the sincere protests of the other. Pope Pius XI referred to this when he said: "Holy Church knows well that not infrequently one of the parties is sinned against rather than sinning, when for a grave cause he or she reluctantly allows the perversion of the right order. In such a case, there is no sin, provided that, mindful of the law of charity, he or she does not neglect to seek to dissuade and to deter the partner from sin." This problem can take many different forms and can cause much anguish of conscience. It is impossible to give specific rules of conduct that would fit every case; individual direction is a practical necessity for those who find themselves in this unfortunate situation.

5. The Use of Rhythm

The Catholic Ideal—A Large Family

Discussion of birth control is apt to develop a negative attitude toward children; it makes us think too much in terms of avoiding sin. To counteract this attitude it is well to recall that, aside from all question of sin and obligation, the Catholic *ideal* is the large family. This does not mean that the Church urges Catholics to have as many children as they possibly can, independently of circumstances. But it does mean that, granted the proper conditions for begetting and rearing children, it is better to have many than few. One reason for this is that, other things being equal, character formation is better achieved in the large family than in the small family. Another reason is that, even from the natural point of view, children are a blessing to their parents, to the community, and to the nation. And a final, and supernatural, reason is that children are new members of the Mystical Body; they are born not merely for earth but for heaven.

Child-bearing a Duty. We stress this ideal because it is easy to lose sight of it in discussions about sin and duty. It would be wrong,

however, to think of child-bearing only as an ideal; it is also to some extent a *duty*. Pope Pius XII made this very clear in his address on the moral problems of married life when he said:

> The matrimonial contract, which confers upon the parties the right to satisfy the inclination of nature, constitutes them in a state of life, the state of matrimony. Now upon the parties who make use of this right by the specific act of their state, nature and the Creator impose the function of providing for the conservation of the human race. This is the characteristic contribution from which their state of life derives its peculiar value: *bonum prolis*—the blessing of offspring. The individual and society, the people and the nation, the Church herself, all depend for their existence, in the order God has established, upon fertile marriage. It follows from this that to enter upon the state of matrimony, to make constant use of the faculty proper to it and only in matrimony allowable, and on the other hand consistently and deliberately, and without a serious reason, to shirk the primary duty it imposes, would be to sin against the very meaning of married life.

Legitimate Continence in Marriage. Nevertheless, despite the beauty of the Catholic ideal and the importance of the social duty, there are situations in which it is permissible, advisable, or perhaps even obligatory to take some means of avoiding or postponing conception. But the only morally sound means is continence, either continuous or periodic. In this latter case (periodic continence) husband and wife have marriage relations during the times of the month when ovulation is not likely to take place, and they abstain from intercourse at ovulation time—that is, some days before and after ovulation. This method of avoiding conception has come to be popularly known as the rhythm.

Three Questions Involved in Morality of Rhythm

Catholics sometimes say that they are much confused by what they read about the morality of using the rhythm. One reason for this may be that certain aspects of the problem that allow for differences of opinion are given too much prominence in the press. But another reason may well be that any honest decision about using rhythm must be based on the careful consideration of three questions; and the final answer, in view of all the factors, may be somewhat complicated. These questions are: (1) is there a sufficient reason for avoiding conception; (2) can the rhythm be tried without doing more harm than good; and (3) are both parties willing to try it? We shall try to give a clear explanation of each question and to avoid controversial topics as much as possible.

1. ***Is there a sufficient reason for avoiding conception?***

We have already quoted the paragraph in which Pope Pius XII stated that those who use their marriage rights have a duty to provide for the conservation of the human race. This duty, like other duties to do good, is limited by circumstances. There can be sound reasons for exempting married people from the duty, either temporarily or permanently. The following paragraph from the address of Pope Pius XII makes this clear.

> From the obligation of making this positive contribution it is possible to exempt, for a long time and even for the whole duration of married life, if there are serious reasons, such as those often provided in the so-called "indications" of the medical, eugenical, economic and social order. It therefore follows that the observance of the infertile periods may be *licit* from the moral point of view; and under the conditions mentioned it is so in fact. Nevertheless, in the absence—according to a reasonable and equitable judgment—of similar serious reasons, whether personal or circumstantial, the intention of married people to avoid habitually the fecundity of their union, while continuing to give full satisfaction to their sensual desires, can be based only on a false outlook on life or on motives that are foreign to true ethical standards.

In this paragraph the Pope gives no concrete examples of situations that justify the use of rhythm, but he gives us the key to such examples by referring to the "so-called indications," because this statement obviously refers to the reasons often suggested by doctors and sociologists to justify artificial birth prevention. The Church cannot admit these or any other reasons as a justification of contraception, because it is intrinsically evil; but she can and does admit that they are justifying reasons for practicing rhythm. The former practice is unnatural, artificial. The latter is not. In the former instance the marriage relation is deliberately frustrated in its natural power to generate life. In the latter such is not the case. Because of this, it will be well for us to illustrate the reasons by some concrete examples.

A Medical Reason for Using Rhythm. A *medical* reason for using rhythm is had when pregnancy would be dangerous, or when either parent is too ill to take proper care of children, or when experience has shown that conception usually results in miscarriage or still birth.

A Eugenical Reason for Using Rhythm. A *eugenical* reason is had when there is real probability that children would be mentally defective, or that they would have some other serious hereditary defect,

or when the mental illness of one of the parents would seriously affect the rearing of the children.

An Economic Reason. There is an *economic* reason, not only when parents suffer from dire poverty but also when they are financially unable to provide for children according to the standards of decent living frequently outlined by the Popes and our hierarchy. These standards include frugal comfort in living conditions, the possibility of properly educating the children, and the possibility of saving reasonably for the future.

A Social Reason. Finally, by a *social* reason for using rhythm is meant a lack of proper housing conditions, overpopulation, employment that is not conducive to proper child-bearing, e.g., military service.

The foregoing are merely examples of the general reasons suggested by the Pope. The careful reader will immediately note that, though all these reasons are to some degree serious, yet they vary greatly in this respect. The eugenical reasons and a medical reason such as danger to life in pregnancy might justify the use of rhythm throughout the whole of married life, whereas most of the other reasons would usually be valid only for a temporary postponement of pregnancy or for the reasonable spacing of births. But while the *use* of the marriage relationship can be suspended under certain circumstances its *right* cannot be rejected.

2. ***Can the rhythm be tried without doing more harm than good?***

The Question of Fostering Love and Safeguarding Chastity. The first question was mainly concerned with the primary ends of marriage. But, as we have seen, marital intercourse is also designed by God for fostering love and safeguarding chastity. These secondary ends of marriage are very important, and no decision about using the rhythm should ignore them. The use of rhythm can create tensions in married love, and it can give rise to severe temptations against chastity which include the danger of self-abuse, of mutual fondling to the point of culpable orgasm, and even of infidelity. It can make marital intercourse itself distasteful to a woman because the one time of the month when she has strong physical desire may be the time when rhythm calls for abstinence.

The degree of these and similar dangers differs greatly with different couples; and ability to adjust to them would differ, too. No doubt, a mature couple who have a good reason for avoiding conception can make the necessary adjustment and even deepen the

spiritual quality of their love by using rhythm. But the adjustment must be made, or the harm resulting from trying the rhythm might be so great as to nullify an otherwise good reason for avoiding conception. As for those who do not have good reasons, the attempt to use rhythm would usually imply the rash courting of these dangers, as well as the shirking of their procreative duty.

3. ***Are both willing to try the rhythm?***

Mutual Consent Required. As a general rule, the use of rhythm should be by mutual consent. It would be a serious violation of the marriage contract for one party to insist on it against the reasonable opposition of the other. In some cases, of course, opposition would involve a real danger to a mother's life. But in many cases the judgment of the reasonableness of opposition would have to take account of many personal factors such as those mentioned in our explanation of the second question. For instance it would be reasonable for one party to object to the use of rhythm if it meant severe temptations against chastity to him or her.

Counsel Advisable. There are cases, no doubt, in which a sincere and mature couple can readily answer the three questions and judge for themselves whether the use of rhythm would be permitted and advisable. But in most cases they need the help of a prudent counselor. It is often said that Catholics should consult their confessor. This should not be taken too literally, because the confessional has its limitations. In the confessional a priest talks to only one party and frequently he does not know the person. For advice about using the rhythm it would be much better for husband and wife to go together to a priest whom they know, and who understands them and the conditions under which they live. In this way they can obtain help not only in judging what they are permitted to do but also in making the proper adjustment to the difficulties they might face in carrying out their decisions.

Case of Dangerous Childbirth

Two further points call for brief mention here. The first concerns the case in which childbirth would be dangerous and the use of rhythm would not be effective. The only morally permissible means of avoiding this risk is continuous abstinence from intercourse. The Church admits that this is heroism, but she solemnly denies that such heroism is impossible with the grace of God. We are sometimes too apt to assume a defeatist attitude regarding this matter; and it

would be well for all of us to recall frequently these forceful words of Pope Pius XII when he spoke on the subject:

> It is an injustice to the men and women of our time to regard them as incapable of prolonged heroism. Nowadays for many reasons—perhaps under the yoke of hard necessity, sometimes even in the service of an unjust cause—heroism is exercised to a degree and an extent that in times past would have been deemed impossible. Why, then, must this heroism, if the circumstances really call for it, halt at the frontiers of passion and natural inclination? Obviously, anyone who does not want to control himself will not be able to do so; and anyone who thinks he can control himself relying only on his own strength, and without sincerely and perseveringly asking God's help, is doomed to disillusionment.

It should be noted that the Pope does not say that married people are obliged to avoid this risk. Certainly there are some cases in which they might lead a normal married life and trust in divine providence. But a decision of this kind is very difficult and it should not be made without much prayer and sound spiritual guidance.

The Question of Infertility

Our final point concerns the direct opposite of the problem discussed in these last two sections: namely, the question of infertility. Many people who intensely want children find that for some reason or other their intercourse is not fruitful. In some of these cases the difficulty can be remedied by proper medical care. In seeking such care it would be well to get advice from a local Catholic hospital because some doctors, in making tests for infertility, especially on men, insist on using means that are morally objectionable.

Insemination. The practice of insemination referred to in the foregoing chapter is morally wrong.

(NOTE: Quotations from the encyclical on Christian Marriage used in this chapter are taken from the translation published by the Paulist Press; quotations from the address of Pope Pius XII on the moral problems of married life (Oct. 29, 1951) are taken from the translation made by Canon George D. Smith and published in *The Clergy Review,* December, 1951, and January, 1952.)

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *Is this lesson meant to deal with the entire field of morals as it pertains to marriage? If not, to what particular moral considerations is it restricted?*

2. *What are some of the moral values of the marriage right?*

3. *What are the three special and exclusive privileges acquired by the husband and wife through the marriage contract?*

4. *What general rule indicates the limits of these privileges? To what three practical points can this general rule be reduced?*

5. *Might one spouse sin by causing unnecessary pain or repugnance to the other?*

6. *Is thought and desire of each other on the part of spouses morally permissible? Are there circumstances under which they could become sinful?*

7. *Do spouses have an obligation toward each other with regard to the privileges of marriage?*

8. *Give examples of a request for intercourse that would be unreasonable.*

9. *Is there an obligation of love-making aside from marital intercourse?*

10. *What is the teaching of the Church regarding artificial birth control?*

11. *Is it possible that in a case of birth control only one of the spouses would be guilty of sin?*

12. *What is the Catholic ideal regarding child-bearing?*

13. *Is child-bearing a duty for the married?*

14. *May temporary or even permanent continence in marriage ever be morally legitimate?*

15. *Indicate some reasons that might make the avoidance of conception by non-artificial means justifiable?*

16. *Give an example of a medical reason for using rhythm.*

17. *Give an example of a eugenical reason for using rhythm.*

18. *Is dire poverty the only legitimate economic reason for using rhythm?*

19. *Give one or more social reasons for using rhythm.*

20. *Might not the use of rhythm do more harm than good to spouses?*

21. *Is mutual consent on the part of the spouses required to use rhythm?*

22. *Should Catholics consult with their confessor before using rhythm?*

23. *What would be the obligation on the part of spouses in a case in which childbirth would be dangerous and the use of rhythm ineffective?*

24. *Is insemination morally lawful?*

NOTES

INCOME
MEDICAL CARE
DIVINE PROVIDENCE
A PROGRAM FOR SAVINGS
SOCIAL SERVICES
RELIGION
BUDGETING

Economic Preparation for Marriage

LESSON VII

VII

ECONOMIC PREPARATION FOR MARRIAGE

ECONOMIC preparation for marriage and family living is deserving of careful attention on the part of those looking toward marriage. In no small measure is the happiness of a family linked with the role that money plays in the home. To give proper consideration to the economic, therefore, is a matter definitely dictated by prudence. To do so should contribute in a positive way toward making the foundation of the home that is contemplated reasonably secure. It should eliminate many occasions of discord and many causes of worry.

INCOME

As to income, no specific dollar and cents assessment can be made for each couple. But there should be a minimum income that will provide for simple necessities and a measure of comforts. A sufficiency of food, drink, shelter, and clothing represent minima that all must have. For some there are requirements over and above these simple necessities because of their particular state of life. A professional person, for instance, normally has certain conventional needs that a laboring man does not have. Then there are also luxuries. By these are meant anything over and above both absolute and conventional needs.

Naturally the more important things should be ranked first. Absolute needs should be assured first, and only then should there be expenditures for conventional needs or for sheer luxuries. This is not an idle assertion today. Not a few families in our time spend for luxuries such as drink and a variety of unnecessary gadgets, when they should be using their income for necessities. Indeed many have come to consider luxuries needs.

Pope Pius XII significantly said in his Encyclical on *Reconstructing the Social Order* that a sufficient income was a help rather than a hindrance to virtue.

The Husband's Income. Since the cash income of the husband is normally the main source of family revenue, a steady income on his part should be assured. Steady employment is therefore highly important. It constitutes, one might say, the firm cornerstone for the financial security necessary to the new family unit created by the marriage bond. The minimum to be expected by a bride would be a job on the part of the bridegroom which yields income sufficient to provide an ample living on a modest scale. A marriage in which it is necessary for both parties to work outside the home to provide a minimum subsistence is practically destined to failure or frustration, because the union is based on a condition inconsistent with the true end of marriage.

The Housewife's Contribution. The housewife, however, can also make a very considerable contribution to the family income. This takes the form of savings to the family rather than money income. It consists of work done by her in and around the homeplace, such as cooking, washing, repairing and the like. It is estimated that the industrious housewife can produce such revenue in services to the extent of $2,000 and more a year. That is particularly the case when gardening and canning can be added. Such an amount will, of course, make a very real difference in the standard of living of any lower income or middle class family.

Social Services and Benefits. Certain public and private social services may also add to the family income. There are many welfare services available today. In the United States there are, for instance, various grants and benefits offered by the Social Security Act. Needless to say, it would be well for a couple looking toward marriage to acquaint themselves with the possibilities that exist so as to be able to make an intelligent use of them.

A word might be added here about family allowances. Unfortunately, up to the present at least (1955), we do not have a family allowance act in this country. Its usual provisions would be very helpful to many growing families. Canada is one of a large number of countries that does have such an Act. It provides allowances for children under 16, maintained in a family. The size of the allowance varies with the age of each child. Children under 6 years receive $5 per month; children aged 6 to 10 receive $6; those aged 13 to 16, $8. With this extra income many a mother who might otherwise be forced to work outside the home, can remain in her home and care for her children. There are also other benefits to the family.

A Program of Savings

The matter of savings is very important to the family. A cash reserve will mean much to the couple when they come to set up their home after their wedding and in meeting growing expenses and emergencies that arise later on. Yet often, unfortunately, this is ignored today. Where the unmarried man and woman are working and earning, a portion of their income should be earmarked as savings for their future married life.

A habit of Saving. Quite as important as a premarriage savings account is a habit of saving that will be carried over into a couple's future family life. Savings satisfy the natural tendency to provide for security. They also establish a foundation for a favorable credit recommendation should the need arise. The systematic withdrawal of an amount of money each pay period aids tremendously in establishing a new marriage on a firm financial foundation. Regardless of the amount of money earned something should be set aside specifically for savings. When the pay is meager and the expenses high only a small amount can be set aside for this purpose. No circumstance, however, should be allowed to interfere with the determination of a couple to continue developing and fostering the saving or thrift habit.

A dollar and cents amount should not be specified in a savings program. Rather a figure based on a percentage of weekly or monthly earnings should be determined. Thus more modest goals can be more easily achieved without undue sacrifice and hardship. Such a percentage figure has the advantage of permitting the savings to be adjusted to increased income or periods of less income.

How to Handle the Savings. The money set aside for savings should not be kept in any readily accessible place. Rather should the funds be deposited in some investment which insures safety of principal, yields a modest return and may be withdrawn as the need for its expenditure arises. Banks, building and loan associations, company and parish credit unions, government bonds and postal savings are all sources of protected investment, providing modest yields and ease of deposit and withdrawal.

Uses of Savings. In the average growing family opportunities will arise for making very good use of savings or cash reserves accumulated. Expenditures of families with children in high school or college, for instance, will normally run higher than when children are younger. It should mean much to the family if it will have been able, over the years preceding, to lay something aside for this special drain on

its income. There are also other examples in which a nest egg laid aside will stand the family in good stead. For instance, it might enable the family to seize an unusual opportunity for a better job for the main breadwinner.

Caring for Emergencies. So, too, can a cash reserve that may be used to meet emergencies that arise be of genuine importance. Unexpected illness or the loss of a job on the part of the main breadwinner are examples of this. Happily unemployment insurance very often helps substantially to meet the family's current expenses when the head of the home is out of work. But even with this help savings are necessary to keep up certain fixed charges such as payment on insurance or on a home. So, too, will savings be a blessing when unusually heavy medical expenses must be met that are not covered by insurance.

Insurance

One type of savings is insurance. In fact, it is probably the most common form of individual saving outside the realm of cash accumulations. Those who are looking forward to marriage do well to explore in advance the possibilities and advantages of insurance. Its purpose is especially to meet certain more or less inevitable emergencies or contingencies. Whereas savings might take care of contingencies for which the total amount of expenditures varies little from year to year, it is wiser to depend on insurance to cover situations in which there is danger of a very considerable loss. Insurance, for instance, on the life of the main breadwinner of the family, on the home, on worthwhile personal possessions should be looked upon as necessities and should always come before expenditures for luxuries.

Sources of the Insurance. One thing to be considered in connection with insurance is its source. If a person has been in the service, he should by all means hold on to his government policy. Fraternal organizations, such as the Catholic Order of Foresters and the Knights of Columbus, offer insurance to members which is very desirable. Group insurance is a very economical protection. Commercial companies offer a variety of types of insurance plus various combination policies that may provide advantages for certain families.

As to the amount of insurance that should be carried, one recommendation made is that it be four times the amount of one's annual income.

A young couple may well be advised to carry hospitalization and if possible medical-surgical insurance.

Some health and accident policies pay cash benefits. Others pay for the services rendered by the hospital. Probably the best known is the Blue Cross plan which is issued by a non-profit organization. This plan provides hospital care to groups and sometimes to individuals. The Blue Shield plan also provides for surgical care. It would be well for every family to have Blue Cross or similar protection.

Expenditures or Outgo

As stated in the foregoing, not only is the income of the family of importance but also the outgo or its expenditures. The matter of handling the family finances should be frankly discussed during the period of engagement and some arrangement should be reached regarding it. Some kind of agreement or understanding arrived at beforehand will probably eliminate a certain amount of unfortunate family strife and bickering later. There is both question of who is to do the spending or other handling of money and of how it is to be done. As to the former, rather commonly certain matters, such for instance as paying rent or public service or similar bills, are taken care of by the husband, while the wife buys the family food and similar items. Certain purchases may well be made together. That is particularly true of important ones.

As to the matter of how expenditures should be made, some authorities have suggested the following guides that might advantageously be observed in making purchases: 1) know your materials; 2) closely investigate bargains; 3) consider whether the article is needed; 4) buy the best you can afford; 5) buy things that do not require expensive upkeep; 6) in general buy from well-established houses rather than fly-by-night operators.[1] We shall refer to these guides in some detail later.

Budgeting

A budget is a prerequisite for intelligent buying. The question before the family is not so often whether the purchase under consideration is, in itself, desirable or useful but whether it is in keeping with the possible alternatives, the income available and the needs of the family at that particular moment. A sound, balanced, long-range program of budgeting aids the husband and wife in reaching a proper decision—a decision based on fact and not on the responses

[1] Cissels, Robert and Helen, *Stretching the Family Income*; New York: Joseph F. Wagner, Inc.; 1953.

elicited by the many emotional appeals common to modern advertising and selling. A sound budget is perhaps the most important factor of all in keeping down unnecessary family expenditures.

Sample model budgets are readily available. But these usually have some real weaknesses. Often they do not show a right sense of values. Usually their basis is quantity rather than quality. Then, too, they frequently lack the flexibility necessary for meeting changing price levels and conditions.

A Recommended Budget Approach

Outstanding among specific items calling for attention in a budget are the following: food; clothing; housing; auto; medical care; recreation; religion. Sketching a broad outline allotting specific amounts to these and other items calling for some outlay should give a general idea of what can be done and what cannot be done on the basis of the family's income. With this preliminary general outline on hand a detailed plan must be worked out.

Food. Food is always an important item in a family budget. Rather commonly is it the largest single item of expense. An important consideration with regard to it should always be the nutritive value of the food. It should be a relatively simple matter to plan an adequate diet for the family today. There is available much information on the subject.

Clothing. It is estimated that in poor or middle-class families the cost of clothing per year very commonly comes to a third, or a little more, of the cost of the food. Actually studies show a rather striking uniformity in the proportion of the income that families of all income levels spend for clothing. There are certain differences, it is true. For example, city families ordinarily spend slightly more for clothing than country families.

A family may spend considerably more for clothing one year than another. This may be accounted for in part by the fact that a family may buy a number of expensive garments one year—for instance, overcoats—and spend nothing for that type of garment the next year.

Housing. Proper shelter or housing is another item that must be reckoned with in the family budget. Usually this item will run considerably higher—at any rate in the case of the family that rents—than its clothing bill. The actual amount will, of course, depend in some measure on the size of the family at a given time.

Rather commonly in our cities a newly wedded couple with limited capital will start housekeeping in several light-housekeeping rooms or in a small apartment. The next step may be a downpayment on a house of their own. The rural family will very commonly have to begin by renting.

The Auto. For large numbers of Americans, cost of ownership and upkeep of a car also figures in the family budget. It is not a small item, since it takes rather careful management to operate a car on as little as a dollar a day. It is estimated that families that buy a car every four or five years spend as much as 20 to 25 percent of their income the year they buy a new one and about 5 percent for upkeep and operation the years they use the old car.

Medical Care. Some estimates have it that normally proper medical care will take from four to five percent of the family budget. That, however, is at best a broad statement. Actually expenditures vary widely from year to year in families. The cost of routine care for more or less regularly recurring expenditures, for minor illnesses and for preventive medical care and dental attention varies from family to family, depending on its general health level, the ages of members, and the size of the family. These expenses a family can estimate rather accurately. But there are also occasionally heavy expenses—for example, for incapacitating accidents and serious illnesses—that require hospitalization or surgical attention or long-continued medical treatment. In addition there is also often the fact of loss of income due to at least temporary inability to work that has to be reckoned with. These costs and losses cannot normally be foreseen and therefore estimated in advance by the family. It is particularly in caring for these occasional heavy expenses that the health insurance mentioned proves a boon to families.

Recreation. Recreation or entertainment also has a place in a family budget. People have need for recreating themselves. In particular is that true of the run-of-mine type of workers whose tasks are very commonly of a monotonous kind. Hence, even when a family must keep its money outlay at a minimum, it must not neglect provision for suitable recreation. Such recreation can be said to be a need in maintaining the family's physical and mental health.

It is well to note that suitable recreation is quite possible without the extravagant expenditure of money. For instance, friends can be entertained at home. Public parks and recreation places can be utilized for interesting outings, a quiet evening of reading or listen-

ing to the radio or viewing television together in the home may give quite the rest and relaxation an individual needs. And it involves little or no expense.

Religion. The Jewish people of old gave "tithes." That is, they gave one tenth of their income toward the service of God. Catholics may well be mindful of this when they come to consider their contribution to the Church, whether it be for the building and upkeep of the parish plant or for the promotion of the various religious, educational, and charitable services which she offers. The sacrifices their contributions may entail will be well repaid, particularly so in the form of spiritual benefits. They will never lose by giving generously to the cause of religion.

The aforementioned items will not necessarily constitute the entire budget of a family. But they are probably the ones that must most commonly and regularly be dealt with.

Wise Buymanship

A correct budget alone will not guarantee the operation of a successful financial program for a family. That also calls for no little care and even study, particularly regarding buymanship. The following are some specific considerations that might well be kept in mind in connection with this subject. They are in great part an elaboration of the general guides mentioned before.

1. In selecting goods and services consider upkeep and durability and determine to purchase the best the budget allows. A wise purchase will forestall a costly upkeep.

2. Deal with reputable firms that have built their reputation on consumer interest and service. For instance, in purchasing appliances 1) know your firm, 2) know your manufacturer, 3) know your guarantee.

3. Plan shopping tours in advance. A planned buying trip prevents an individual from being distracted from the desired goal by glib generalities, smooth salesmanship, impulse items, and hasty personal decisions.

4. Purchase with an eye to the future, considering what has been purchased previously and what will be purchased in time to come. In buying determine the quality level in advance. Note that price is not a valid guide in making a purchase. The "best" may be a misleading subjective term. Moreover we do not always need the best.

5. Wise buymanship involves a knowledge of the time of day, week and month to make purchases. In the less crowded hours more

time can be spent examining merchandise, more sales assistance can be secured. Shopping trips can be planned to coincide with special bargain days or weekend sales.

6. End of season sales are a saving way to provide basic needs at a lower cost. Remnants, off-lot and surplus stock sales frequently mean bargains for the shopper. Savings at pre-season, anniversary and special sales make the budget dollar go further. The wise buyer will always make certain the sales are really sales.

7. The manner of purchasing governs to a degree whether a shopper can be classed as a wise buyer. Cash and carry businesses reduce overhead accordingly and so can and do usually pass on their savings to customers.

It is important to understand the evils of installment buying and the true carrying charges and interest paid on installment purchases. Installment buying encourages purchases which people really cannot afford. People who buy so must realize that while they get the use of the goods, they do not get the title; if payment cannot be made, the store can repossess and the consumer has nothing to show for his investment. The added cost factors should be considered. Merchandise purchased on the installment plan costs more because of interest and carrying charges.

Purchasing in quantity may mean considerable saving for the family.

Credit

The clamor to make people buy, so characteristic of the day, is almost equaled by the drive to make them borrow. This suggests a pitfall which a new family should be very careful to avoid, namely, the unwise use of credit. Used indiscriminately, it can do much damage. Before agreeing to a credit proposition, a family should understand what they are about to do. Unfortunately this is not easy, for modern merchandisers have devised many ways to sugar coat credit propositions so that costs and other conditions are not what they seem.

Not all use of credit is to be criticized. It can prove beneficial. But it should be used with care. When a family must use credit, it should be informed about the common rates charged by lenders. The following list, for instance, gives the usual rates for various sources of small loans: insurance policies, 4—6%; credit unions, 9—12%; commercial banks, 12—18%; licensed small loan companies, 24—42%; installment sellers, 12—25% and up; loan sharks, 120—1200% and

up. Before making a loan or installment purchase it is a good idea for a couple to compute actual interest rates so that they can compare different sources of credit. A few minutes spent in this way may save many dollars.

It is well to note that cash buying, besides saving on interest, also may result in substantial cash discounts. Of course the buyer must ask for these. This provides another argument in favor of saving. With ready cash on hand the purchaser can buy a lot more real goods for the money spent.

A Spiritual Note

The foregoing considerations may practically all seem far removed from the spiritual. Yet, as a matter of fact, the spiritual note can and should be interwoven with the financial aspects of family life. The economic in family life leaves much room, for instance, for the old hardy virtue of self denial and for relying on the Providence of Almighty God.

Thrift and frugality have become somewhat unpopular words among great numbers today. That is unfortunate because of both the material and the spiritual consequences that result from such a situation. Young folks today should learn to say no to many of the allurements of highly commercialized types of recreation around them. So, too, should they learn to say no to the advertising that seeks to convince them sheer luxuries are absolute necessities. They should learn to say no to the craze to "keep up with the Joneses." That is really to say they should learn again, and should live by, the sterling virtues of self denial and self-discipline and the virtues implied in detachment from the goods of this world. They should learn anew the meaning of Christ's words "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Even the well-to-do can keep themselves truly detached from the goods of this world. And all, rich and poor alike, can develop a child-like trust in Divine Providence, while using to the full the intelligence which God has given them in managing the economic side of their family life. None should overlook for one moment that He has care of them. By doing so their family life will be much the gainer. Above all will that gain show itself in the important realm of the spiritual and eternal. By consistently recalling God's Providence they will be encouraged to live by the all important injunction of the Savior that they should seek first the Kingdom of God and His justice.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *Why are economic or money matters of importance in marriage?*
2. *Who should normally be the main source of income of the family? Can the wife make substantial contributions to the income without working outside the home?*
3. *Can social services and benefits contribute to the family income? If so, give examples.*
4. *What are family allowances? Show how the Canadian family allowance system works.*
5. *What are some of the advantages to spouses of a habit of saving?*
6. *How should one handle savings? For what special purposes might they advantageously be used?*
7. *What purposes might the form of savings known as insurance chiefly serve?*
8. *What are some of the main kinds of insurance?*
9. *Are there any advantages in those looking toward marriage discussing money matters before they wed?*
10. *What are some of the advantages of a family budget?*
11. *What major items should be given a place in a family budget? Approximately what percentage of the family income should normally be devoted to each?*
12. *State and explain some major rules of wise buymanship.*
13. *Can anything be said in favor of using credit or borrowing? What is to be said of installment buying?*
14. *What are the usual credit rates for various sources of small loans?*
15. *Is there any relationship between the economic and the spiritual?*

The Marriage Ceremony

LESSON VIII

VIII

THE MARRIAGE CEREMONY

MATRIMONY is one of the seven sacraments. Hence, in administering it, the Church follows a special ritual. Indeed, she embellishes it with particularly impressive ceremonies. Catholic couples, contemplating marriage, should avail themselves of this rich ritual, even including such features as may only be counseled, and not, therefore, made obligatory on the part of the Church. It is a very important day in their lives. The Church is eager to make it a most memorable and truly blessed one.

In discussing the marriage rite, it is well to distinguish these three things: 1) the ceremony by which the sacrament itself is conferred 2) the special Nuptial Mass that follows immediately after; 3) the special blessing, known as the nuptial blessing, that is given the couple during the Mass.

A. ADMINISTRATION OF THE SACRAMENT

Spiritual Preparation. Those to be married should be careful not to become so involved in material preparations that the spiritual is neglected. Special prayers, particularly during the last few days preceding the wedding, asking God's blessing upon the important step that they are about to take and asking of Him an abundance of the graces of the sacrament are very much in place. Even a special day or two of retreat or recollection is to be highly recommended. This would help them to enter, in the best disposition possible, that new state of life on which will depend in the future the realization of their ultimate goal in life.

The reception of the sacrament of matrimony should be preceded by the reception of the sacrament of penance. In some dioceses this is demanded. It is, of course, always required of those who may be in the state of serious sin. Matrimony is a sacrament of the living. Hence one must be in the state of grace to receive it worthily.

Wedding Day Preliminaries. Among some peoples who observe the beautiful custom of parents blessing their children from early childhood, one still finds the following practice: before going to

the church on their wedding day, the two to be married go together to the home of each of their parents and kneel to receive their blessing. After this day it will be for them to exercise the priestly prerogative of blessing in their newly founded home. It is to be hoped we have not become too sophisticated to introduce or renew this or similar practices in our midst.

Entering the Church

The precise manner of entering the church for the ceremony, the place in the church to be occupied by the wedding party, and other details may differ somewhat in various sections of the country. However, the following procedure is one that is very commonly observed: The bridegroom, the best man, and other male attendants, if any, gather in the sacristy or to the front of the church at the end of the communion railing on the Epistle side a short time before the ceremony is to begin. There they await the solemn entrance of the bride at the time appointed for the ceremony. The bride is escorted by her father. She is preceded by the bridesmaids and followed by the page and flower girl. All proceed up the aisle of the church while the organ plays. The bridegroom and attendants meet the bridesmaids and bride at the center of the church before the open sanctuary gates, each accompanying his partner to the foot of the altar. The priest, robed in the vestments of the Holy Sacrifice, will be awaiting them there.

The Four Parts of the Marriage Ceremony

In the administration of the sacrament proper which is now to follow, four distinct parts can be distingugished. They are: 1) the allocution or exhortation given by the officiating priest; 2) the eliciting of the consent to marriage on the part of the contracting parties; 3) the blessing and conferring of the ring; 4) the giving of a blessing and the recitation of several concluding prayers by the priest.

1) *The Exhortation.* The priest first addresses a few words to the bridal couple, reminding them of the sacramental dignity of marriage and of the fact that they are taking upon themselves very serious obligations. There is a prepared text for this talk which the priest usually makes use of. Couples would do well to read it carefully far in advance of their wedding day, and even to meditate seriously upon its words from time to time. It reads as follows:

> Dear friends in Christ: As you know, you are about to enter into a union which is most sacred and most serious, a union which

was established by God Himself. By it, He gave man a share in the greatest work of creation, the work of the continuation of the human race. And in this way He sanctified human love and enabled man and woman to help each other live as children of God, by sharing a common life under His fatherly care.

Because God Himself is thus its author, marriage is of its very nature a holy institution, requiring of those who enter into it a complete and unreserved giving of self. But Christ our Lord added to the holiness of marriage an even deeper meaning and a higher beauty. He referred to the love of marriage to describe His own love for His Church, that is, for the people of God whom He redeemed by His own blood. And so He gave to Christians a new vision of what married life ought to be, a life of self-sacrificing love like His own. It is for this reason that His Apostle, St. Paul, clearly states that marriage is now and for all time to be considered a great mystery, intimately bound up with the supernatural union of Christ and the Church, which union is also to be its pattern.

This union, then, is most serious, because it will bind you together for life in a relationship so close and so intimate that it will profoundly influence your whole future. That future, with its hopes and disappointments, its successes and its failures, its pleasures and its pains, it joys and its sorrows, is hidden from your eyes. You know that these elements are mingled in every life, and are to be expected in your own. And so, not knowing what is before you, you take each other for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death.

Truly, then, these words are most serious. It is a beautiful tribute to your undoubted faith in each other, that, recognizing their full import, you are nevertheless so willing and ready to pronounce them. And because these words involve such solemn obligations, it is most fitting that you rest the security of your wedded life upon the great principle of self-sacrifice. And so you begin your married life by the voluntary and complete surrender of your individual lives in the interest of that deeper and wider life which you are to have in common. Henceforth you belong entirely to each other; you will be one in mind, one in heart, and one in affections. And whatever sacrifices you may hereafter be required to make to preserve this common life, always make them generously. Sacrifice is usually difficult and irksome. Only love can make it easy; and perfect love can make it a joy. We are willing to give in proportion as we love. And when love is perfect, the sacrifice is complete. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son; and the Son so loved us that he gave Himself for our salvation. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

No greater blessing can come to your married life than pure conjugal love, loyal and true to the end. May, then, this love with which you join your hands and hearts today, never fail,

but grow deeper and stronger as the years go on. And if true love and the unselfish spirit of perfect sacrifice guide your every action, you can expect the greatest measure of earthly happiness that may be allotted to man in this vale of tears. The rest is in the hands of God. Nor will God be wanting to your needs; He will pledge you the life-long support of His graces in the Holy Sacrament which you are now going to receive.

2) *The Mutual Consent.* Immediately following these words of exhortation comes the all-important expression of consent to the marriage on the part of the two. This is the very essence of the sacrament. It takes place as follows: the priest, in the presence of the witnesses, asks the man and woman separately if they wish to take each other in marriage. By their simple answer, "I will," the two confer upon each other the sacrament. Actually, therefore, as already noted before, the contracting parties themselvves administer the sacrament. The priest is only the official witness for the Church. That is true in spite of the words that he makes use of immediately following the giving of the consent; namely, "I join you together in marriage, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." By these words he merely gives witness to the fact, in his capacity of official representative for the Church, that by the mutual consent of the two the reception of the sacrament has been accomplished.

3) *The Ring Ceremony.* The foregoing is immediately followed by what is commonly referred to as the ring ceremony, the blessing and bestowal of the wedding ring. This ring symbolizes the bridal party's conjugal union. It is meant to serve as a constant reminder of one love and one loyalty between the two. In imparting the blessing to it, the priest says: "Bless, O Lord, this ring which we bless in Thy name, that she who is to wear it, keeping true faith with her husband, may abide in Thy peace and obedience to Thy will, and ever live in mutual love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen." Once blessed, the ring is an important sacramental.

Following the prayer of the blessing, the priest springles the ring (or rings) with holy water in the sign of the cross. The bridegroom then receives it from the priest and places it on the ring finger of the bride; that is, on the third finger of the left hand. He then says after the priest: "With this ring I thee wed, and plight unto thee my troth."

In accordance with Catholic tradition, a plain gold or silver ring should be used for the ceremony.

In South America and a number of European countries each of the spouses is given a ring. This is known as the double ring ceremony. It has not been customary in the United States in the past. But World War II gave considerable impetus to the practice. Where there is a double ring ceremony, the bride says the same words as did the groom as she places the ring on the latter's finger. Incidentally, when two rings are used the priest blesses them together.

After the ring has been placed on the finger of the spouse, the priest makes the sign of the cross over the couple, with the usual accompanying words of blessing, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen."

As already noted, the blessed wedding ring is a sacramental. Some idea of the respect that the Church has for it might be gleaned, for instance, from the fact that several years ago the Archbishop of Westminster granted to husband and wife a one hundred days' indulgence every time they kissed the bride's wedding ring and said with contrite heart this prayer: "Grant, O Lord, that loving Thee we may love each other and live according to Thy will."

The words and actions of the ring ceremony differ somewhat in various lands, but the meaning and symbolism remain the same. The ring is everywhere meant to be a constant reminder of the promises made to God at the foot of His altar, an ever-present token of faithfulness on the part of husband and wife, and a representation of the endless fullness of wedded joys.

4) *Concluding Prayers.* Several verses and a prayer recited by the priest, bring the marriage ceremony proper to an end. The prayer reads: "Look with favor, we beseech Thee, O Lord, upon these Thy servants and deign in Thy goodness to protect the institution which Thou hast established for the increase of the human race, that those who are made one according to Thy will, may be safeguarded by Thy protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen."

B. The Nuptial Mass

Actually, the foregoing completes the marriage proper. The Mass which follows, and the nuptial blessing which is given during the Mass, while definitely linked with the sacrament of matrimony, are nevertheless something super-added to it. That is not to say, to be sure, that they are not both highly important, or that either should

be carelessly omitted. But the fact remains that they are not required for the valid administration of the sacrament of matrimony. In the following paragraphs consideration will be given to both.

As soon as the marriage ceremony proper is over, the couple and their attendants go from the foot of the altar to the places assigned them, usually in the sanctuary, and the priest begins Mass. There is a special Nuptial Mass for the occasion. There are certain important feasts of the Church on which this cannot be used, the liturgical regulations requiring that the Mass of the day be said. But ordinarily, the couples concerned can, if they wish, select a day on which the special Mass for spouses can be celebrated. They should be counseled to do so.

While, as has been stated, the wedding Mass is not essential to the sacrament, it nevertheless illustrates the great importance of marriage in the eyes of the Church. Matrimony is really the only sacrament administered with a Mass specially for the occasion. The sacrament of holy orders, for instance, is indeed administered at Mass. But it has no special Mass, strictly speaking. The Mass proper for the day the ordination takes place is celebrated and a few prayers are added for those being ordained. But in the case of the sacrament of matrimony, all this is different. Every changeable part of the Mass is a special prayer for the bridal couple. Incidentally, the only time when the priest interrupts his own and the congregation's preparation for Holy Communion is at the wedding Mass when he stops in order to recite the prayers of the nuptial blessing. That blessing will be referred to in some detail later on. However, the point may well be made here that its importance in the eyes of the Church is indicated by the time chosen to give it. With the exception of the consecration of the holy oils on Maundy Thursday, no other blessing is so intimately associated with the canon of the Mass. Father Bernard Sause, O.S.B., seems to have caught the full significance of this when he wrote the following: "For the only time in her life, the sanctuary gates are thrown open for the woman to enter during the Sacrifice, and at the altar upon which the consecrated species rest, she receives a sacramental which has a deep meaning and efficacy that becomes more cherished with each remembrance during the passing years. Failure to understand the bride's privilege in a truly Catholic marriage indicates a lack of appreciation of the sacrament of matrimony" (*Why Catholic Marriage is Different.*)

Text of the Nuptial Mass

Reference will be made in the following to some of the major parts of the Nuptial Mass. There should be no need to quote the whole, since the full text is readily available today in convenient and attractive booklet form. Incidentally, it should be well for a couple contemplating marriage to secure copies in advance of the wedding Mass and to go over the words carefully. As a matter of fact, copies are often distributed nowadays to all who assist at the Mass.[1] This helps those in attendance to follow the Mass and ceremonies intelligently and devoutly. The booklet may also serve as a fitting souvenir of the wedding. Arrangements can easily be made to have a few pertinent data, such as the names of the couple and the date of the wedding, printed on the cover page or elsewhere.

The Introit. The Introit of the Nuptial Mass is taken from the Book of Tobias (7:15 and 8:19). It begins with this sentence: "May the God of Israel join you together." Those words, pronounced by the venerable Raguel as he placed the hand of his daughter into that of Tobias, immediately bring before us one of the great truths of marriage: God is its Author. It is not a mere man-made or man-administered institution. It is God who is its Author and the source of the couple's conjugal love. It is God who alone can give it fruitfulness of offspring. The two are to become co-creators with God. They are to become, as the encyclical on *Christian Marriage* puts it, "ministers as it were of the Divine Omnipotence.

Important indeed in this day of secularism, of so much marriage without God and His Church, are those opening words of the Nuptial Mass, "May the God of Israel join you together." The newly-married Catholic couple should seek to imprint their full meaning and import deeply upon their minds and hearts as they kneel before God's altar during the Holy Sacrifice.

The text from Tobias was a happy choice indeed for the Introit of the Nuptial Mass. The particular verse, and the use in the prayers of the Mass of language reminiscent of the whole of the Book of Tobias—a Book which might well be called the "Book of the Family"—is replete with a host of moral lessons for family living. It is, one might say, the foreshadowing in the Old Testament of the perfect ideal of the family realized in the Holy Family of the New

[1] Copies may be purchased, for instance, from *The Liturgical Press,* Collegeville, Minnesota, or from the Catechetical Guild Educational Association, St. Paul, Minnesota.

Law. It is a prophecy and foreshadowing of the sacred marriage of Christ and the Church.

The Epistle. As we come to the Epistle of the Nuptial Mass, we leave the beautiful foreshadowing of the Old Law and come to the full blaze of the reality of the New Law. The Epistle is taken from the fifth chapter of St. Paul to the Ephesians. It is in its lines that the Apostle of the Gentiles states the startling truth that the union of husband and wife in Christian marriage is a symbol or representation of the sacred union of Christ with His Spouse, the Church. It is there that he infers that the latter union—that, namely of Christ with His Church—should be the model for the union of the former, or the union of the two spouses in Christian marriage. The following are some of his words: "Let wives be subject to their husbands as to the Lord." And why? "Because the husband is head of the wife as Christ is head of the Church." To the husbands he addresses these words: "Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the Church and delivered Himself up for her that He might sanctify her." In a word, in its entirety, the fifth chapter of St. Paul to the Ephesians implies that the Christian family, based on Christian marriage, is in a sense the Mystical Body of Christ in miniature. That is to say, it is a replica or copy of the Church. The husband and father is the head of the body and represents Christ. The wife and mother is the body itself and represents the Church. The children are the members of the body; they represent the faithful.

That is indeed sublime doctrine. In fact, it is doctrine so startling that it may be well to emphasize that it is really doctrine and not just a figure of speech or a figment of the imagination; that it is, in other words, truly a belief or mystery of Christianity. Deeply should those entering marriage impress it upon their minds.

An Implication of the Doctrine

Certainly one implication of this teaching of St. Paul that the newly-wedded couple should take seriously to heart is that the relationship between the members of a Christian family must be most ideal. Most carefully should they note on what a high plane St. Paul puts their relationships when he speaks of love. The guide—the measuring rod, as it were—of the husband's love for his wife is Christ's love for his Spouse, the Church. Since that is the case, the wife, in turn, should love the husband as the Church loves Christ. Moreover, by the same token, one must conclude that the children are to look up to their father and mother with something of that

love and reverence and respect that they should bear to Christ and His Church, whom their father and mother respectively represent.

It should be well to recall in this connection a few words from Pope Leo XIII's encyclical on *Christian Marriage* (*Arcanum Divinae Sapientias*). Referring there to the love that should exist between Christian spouses, His Holiness called it a "heaven-born love." Here are his significant words: "Since the husband represents Christ and since the wife represents the Church, let there always be both in him who commands and in her who obeys, a heaven-born love guiding them in their respective duties. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is head of the Church." Obviously, then, differences that might arise between them as the years go on should not depend for settlement, for instance, on show of authority, or on fine distinctions between mine and thine, but on love, a love that is truly "heaven-born." Obviously, too, should this heaven-born love of husband and wife extend to the children. For, as we saw, they represent the faithful of the Church.

That is the Christian ideal for family relationships. Unfortunately it is far from realized in the actual situation we see about us in the secularized civilization of the day, a civilization in which genuine Christian theory and practice are so extensively lacking. Those marrying in Christ should be determined to live by it in the greatest possible measure.

The Gospel. The Gospel of the Nuptial Mass is taken from the 19th chapter of St. Matthew. In it are set forth with unmistakable clarity the two properties of marriage, unity and permanence, already implied in the Epistle of St. Paul to the Ephesians. Particularly to the point are these words: "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh. Therefore, now they are not two but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let no man put assunder."

The Offertory. The brief words of the Offertory of the Mass are these: "In Thee, O Lord, have I hoped. I said, Thou art my God; my times are in Thy hands." These words are obviously an expression of hope and trust in God. And both hope and trust are necessary in Christian marriage if, despite its many consolations and comforts, the hardships and difficulties which are inevitably a part of it, are to be borne in true Christian fashion.

The religious novice goes to the altar at the Offertory of the Mass and offers himself and his life's work to God. So, too, should the bridal pair offer themselves and their life work to Him at the Offer-

tory of their wedding Mass. Like that of the former, theirs too is a vocation in God's service. In their marriage they are consecrated to a joint office in the Mystical Body of Christ, an office that they did not have before marriage. They should accept that office with a profound hope and trust in God.

The Secret. The Secret of the Mass refers specifically to "the holy bond of wedlock" and is an expression of resignation to God's Divine Will in their regard. "Receive, we beseech Thee, O Lord," it reads, "the offering we make to Thee, on behalf of the holy bond of wedlock; and even as this institution is the gift of Thy bounty, so dispose of it according to Thy will." Well may the spouses recall here the words of their promise: "I take thee for better or for worse." They must expect that some hardship and suffering will be their lot. They should be prepared for it.

Similarly are all other changeable parts of the Mass adapted to suit the particular occasion. In other words, they are for the bridal party.

As to the reception of the Holy Eucharist, it should be noted that the missal always assumes that the bride and groom will receive Communion at their Nuptial Mass. It is also generally customary for the witnesses to do so.

C. The Nuptial Blessing

As the Nuptial Mass immediately follows the reception of the sacrament of matrimony, so the special sacramental known as the nuptial blessing is incorporated into the Mass itself. This gives a striking unity to the entire marriage ceremony.

This solemn blessing of marriage, while indeed for both spouses, is especially for the wife. It consists of three meaningful prayers. Two of these the priest recites as he halts the Mass immediately following the *Pater Noster*. For this he stands at the Epistle side of the altar, turned toward the bridegroom and bride, who meanwhile kneel at the altar. The third prayer is recited over them later on, just before the last blessing of the Mass.

The first of the three prayers petitions God's help for the two who have been united in the institution of marriage which God Himself has founded. The second draws a detailed picture of what the life of a truly Christian wife should be. For instance, it holds up for imitation the example of holy women such as Rachael, Rebecca and Sarah. Again, it urges that the wife be adorned with virtue, adhering to faith and the commandments, and that she be faithful to her husband, fortified through strong discipline, grave in demeanor, modest, versed in heavenly doctrine. The words may fittingly be studied carefully before marriage by the bridal pair, and also often recalled and meditated upon after marriage. They are in sharp contrast to many of the ideals that the modern world brings into the home.

The third prayer of the nuptial blessing is recited, as already noted, just before the last blessing of the Mass, or, in other words, immediately following the Postcommunion. The Church chooses this moment when the sacred bond of marriage has been sealed in the Sacrifice of Christ, and when the newlywed couple have been united in the Communion of Christ's Body, to close her prayer with maternal good wishes from the same source with which she began the wedding Mass. "May the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob," she prays, "be with you and may he fulfill His blessings in you, that you may see your children's children even to the third and fourth generation and thereafter may have life everlasting, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost liveth and reigneth forever. Amen." After this prayer the priest sprinkles the newly-married pair with holy water. Then, with head bowed toward the altar, he recites the usual prayer from the Ordinary of the Mass known as the *Placeat*. Finally, turning toward the two, he blesses them, as well as all who have been in attendance at Mass, in the name of the Holy Trinity.

This special nuptial blessing suggests the high esteem in which wedded life is held by the Church. It is truly an extraordinary sacramental. By means of it, Holy Mother Church solemnly petitions God that the marriage union be holy and that it be richly blessed. As is known, its origin reaches back in some form or other to the earliest Christian centuries. It should be particularly meaningful today because of the lack of respect for the married state. It was in line with this thought that Rev. Bernard Sause, O.S.B., wrote of it as follows: "In this blessing and in the lesson it stresses, in wise and humble submission and beautifully worded prayer and sacrifice, the Catholic is in calm possession of the one answer for which others are searching. He has the one counter-influence to a mentality far removed from the sacred and only real nature of Christian marriage. His is a treasure thoroughly to be understood, appreciated, cherished. Its significance is not for the morning of the wedding, only to make the Catholic ceremony different from that of others. It is to regulate life, to lift it to a plane with heights that merely human efforts are incapable of scaling."

Concluding Considerations

In the foregoing, three main things in a Catholic marriage have been distinguished; the sacrament of matrimony proper, which is received at the foot of the altar; the special Mass for the spouses which immediately follows the reception of the sacrament; and the nuptial blessing which is incorporated into the Mass. The absolutely essential thing is, of course, the sacrament of matrimony. We repeat, neither the Mass nor the nuptial blessing can be said to be essential. In other words, one could be validly married without either. Nevertheless, whenever the reception of the sacrament can be followed by a Mass, and the nuptial blessing can be given, both should be done.

So, too, should the wedded pair receive Holy Communion, although, again, the reception of the Holy Eucharist is not an integral part of the sacrament of matrimony. In fact, although the universal law of the Church only counsels, and does not absolutely demand the Mass and Communion and nuptial blessing, the statutes and regulations of some dioceses of the United States prescribe all three.

It should be well to note yet that, while the nuptial blessing is ordinarily given on the day of the marriage contract, there are cases in which it may be conferred even a very considerable time after a marriage has been entered upon. For example, if a non-Catholic party becomes a convert after entering a mixed marriage with a Catholic, the nuptial blessing can and should be given the pair. While it is true that it does not refer to the substance or validity of the marriage, the fact remains that it is a part, and a very important part, of the Church's solemn rite or ceremony. Incidentally, the nuptial blessing can only be given at Mass.

From what has been said in the foregoing, it should be obvious that the nuptial blessing is not given at a mixed marriage. In fact, the Church forbids that it be given at such a marriage. So, too, is the wedding Mass forbidden. One reason for this is the fact that those not of the faith cannot participate in the sacred rite. Another reason is that the Church thereby shows her disapproval of mixed marriages.

However, these are rather exceptional matters. The normal thing is to have both the Mass and the nuptial blessing, and Catholic couples should be most eager to avail themselves of both whenever they can do so. They are a mark of honor to the bride and groom. In a sense, too, they are the Church's official approval of the contract. Needless to add, they are great sources of grace to the wedded pair.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *What should be done by way of spiritual preparation for the sacrament of matrimony?*
2. *What is the customary manner of entering the church for the wedding ceremony?*
3. *Distinguish the four major parts of the marriage ceremony.*
4. *Why is the mutual consent of the bride and groom of very special importance?*
5. *Describe, briefly, the ring ceremony.*
6. *What is the relationship of the Nuptial Mass to the marriage ceremony?*
7. *Where could you secure a copy or copies of the text of the wedding ceremony and Nuptial Mass?*
8. *What does the Epistle of the Nuptial Mass deal with? Indicate one important implication of St. Paul's teaching in the Epistle.*
9. *What does the Gospel of the Nuptial Mass teach?*
10. *When is the nuptial blessing given? Describe, briefly, the prayers of the blessing.*
11. *Is the nuptial blessing a part of the sacrament of matrimony?*
12. *What is the view of the Church regarding the reception of the sacraments of penance and Holy Communion on the occasion of a Catholic marriage?*
13. *Is the nuptial blessing given at a mixed marriage?*

Conception and Pregnancy

"... making the parents the ministers, as it were, of the Divine Omnipotence."

ENCY. ON *Christian Marriage.*

LESSON IX

IX

CONCEPTION AND PREGNANCY

MANY prospective newlyweds, at the time of the pre-marital visit to the doctor, ask to be enlightened on the facts of life in regard to pregnancy and the developing of the baby. Here in brief and with deliberate simplification and repetition is the story of how one starts as a single one-celled egg imprisoned in a bubble of one's mother's ovary.

Principal Phenomena

Deposited by the sexual union (also called coition) within the vagina near the neck of the uterus, the sperm soon finds its own way to the Fallopian tubes where it meets the egg of the female. Several hours may elapse between the union and fertilization.

Reaching the egg (ovum) the spermatozoa (the fertilizing element in the male seed) strive to penetrate it. One alone is successful; the others die. This one spermatozoon pierces the exterior membrane of the egg; the nuclei of the two cells (male and female) draw together and unite to form an embryo (fetus) about 1/125th of an inch in size. From this moment (called the moment of conception), a new being is formed (conceived) having its own soul and possessing in germ the characteristics of the parents from whom it has received its life.

The egg, thus fertilized, continues on until it reaches the womb where it becomes embedded, after about eight days, in a fold of the interior membrane of the womb already prepared for its coming. The egg embedded in the membrane is surrounded by a protective liquid. From this primary cell, which forms the new being, there will emerge by subdivision, many thousands of cells which will make up the perfect human organism. This takes place in a progressive manner. The egg undergoes one change after the other. The embryo takes

nine months to develop and reach its full maturity. At the end of the second week, it is yet only 1/12th of an inch in size. Towards the end of the fourth week, the egg (containing the embryo) has the volume of a pigeon's egg, and measures 2/5 of an inch in length. The heart has already started to form at the end of the third week.

Towards the end of the second month, the egg is about as big as a hen's egg. At this date, the embryo within the egg is 1.7 of an inch long; it begins to take on human form. The head comprises more than one-third of the body; the limbs appear. At the end of the third month, the sex becomes apparent although from the outside it is impossible to determine the sex before birth. After four and a half months of pregnancy, active movements of the fetus can be felt; kicking may be felt by the hand, fetal heart beat about twice as fast as that of the mother. At the sixth month, the child will weigh about two pounds and measure about twelve inches. All this development is unexplainable unless we admit a vital motivating force (the soul) which unites and directs the different stages of development of the organism.

Signs of Conception

Conception stops the periods (menstruation); this stoppage is one of the signs of pregnancy. It is not a certain proof, however, as the menstrual flow may stop for other reasons (sickness, worry, etc.). On the other hand, in rare cases, the menstrual flow may continue for a month or two after conception has taken place.

Other probable signs are the following: frequent desire to urinate because of the pressure of the womb (in the process of enlarging) on the bladder which consequently gives the impression of being full; enlargement and sensitiveness of the breasts, the nipples of which become more prominent and surrounded by a brown areola and many small pigmentations, brown spots on the face and abdomen, progressive enlargement of the abdomen with varying modifications of temperament and nervousness. Positive signs of pregnancy are the active movements of the fetus and the fetal heart beat at five months.

Essential Precautions: Diet; Personal Care

From the beginning of pregnancy, it is very important that the future mother consult a doctor in whom she has confidence. Even when there are no particular complications, such a consultation prevents much needless worry and may be the means of avoiding serious

trouble. A medical consultation at the beginning of a probable pregnancy will do much to remove from the mind of the mother apprehensions that might otherwise disturb and frighten her. The husband would do well to attend this first consultation.

Doctors are ever so careful to protect a woman's modesty by the discreet use of a sheet to drape the patient, permitting the minimum exposure necessary for the pelvic examination. If the patient will relax completely, this examination is entirely painless and finished in a few seconds.

The pelvic examination is of great importance. It enables the doctor to determine if the childbearing organs are healthy and in proper position and if the birth canal is of normal size and shape.

A complete medical history will be asked for by the doctor, including information on previous pregnancies, diseases and the date of the last period. He will want to know the height, weight, blood pressure and pulse rate. He will examine the heart, breasts and abdomen; also the eyes, nose, throat, lungs, neck, teeth and even the feet. Tests will be made of blood and urine. A test for syphilis is required in many states.

Urine tests will be made frequently throughout pregnancy. The kidneys have extra work to do as they must help eliminate waste from the baby as well as from the mother's body. Should something not be going just right, signs will often appear in the urine and the doctor, from his periodic tests can take steps to correct whatever may be the trouble. A fresh sample of urine should be brought to the doctor on each visit.

Normally, pregnancy should not seriously inconvenience a woman. It is frequently due to lack of knowledge as to what should be done during the time that she experiences distress in the form of headaches, visual disturbances, swelling of the legs and ankles, nausea, pain, weakness, etc.

A correct dietary regime is of special importance during this period. The husband should insist that his wife follow such a regime. It is erroneous to think that a pregnant woman "should eat for two." She must be careful at this time to avoid over-burdening her organs of evacuation. The kidneys especially must be protected against overwork during these nine months when they have a double duty to perform. This is one of the major reasons why during pregnancy periodic visits to the doctor are recommended.

Regular habits during pregnancy are of primary importance: protein meals at fixed hours, a moderate amount of play and exercise, light housework not requiring the lifting of heavy weights, etc. Relaxation from fatigue should be found in distractions, physical exercise, entertaining books. A pregnant woman should avoid overworking; she should take plenty of fresh air, sunshine and rest. This does not mean that nothing or next-to-nothing should be done. It does mean simply: the avoidance of extremes that at other times might be permissible, such as late retiring, hard work and strenuous games.[1]

Practical Suggestions for Husband and Wife. Throughout the entire time of pregnancy, a normal woman should strive to cultivate and maintain a cheerful disposition. Unpleasant ideas should be banned from the mind.

The husband for his part must resolve to be more considerate than usual during this time. Let him ponder reverently on the miracle operating in his wife. He must realize that his own conduct greatly contributes to the well-being of the mother and of the future child. He is already a father and should consequently contribute his share in the formation of a baby of whom he will be justly proud. If, during this time, he notices that his wife has periods of sadness, impatience, talkativeness, negligence, sensitiveness, he must at all costs be extra indulgent. Good humor, patience and encouragement should be cultivated. The husband must see to it that his wife does not work too hard; he should seek to save her from all possible fatigue and strive to keep her happy and contented.

In this day of blood banks and antibiotics, there is no justification for the "valley of death" concept of childbirth. Even Cesarean section carries very little risk.

Therapeutic Abortion

A problem which may at times arise in marriage conferences is the problem of therapeutic abortion. It has been amazing to see the retreat in the last twenty years of the so-called "indications" for the interruption of pregnancy, that is, therapeutic abortion. The death of the fetus in these cases is rationalized on a medical basis, but

[1] We recommend that you write to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington 25, D. C., for the following publications on child care: a) *Prenatal Care*; b) *Infant Care*; c) *Your Child from One to Six.*

actually the chief motive is socio-economic. In such cases, the physician not only neglects to safeguard the unborn life entrusted to his care, but actually becomes the deliberate executioner of an innocent human being. Surely this is both unethical and unscientific. "The maternal mortality statistics in two almost equally large and comparable series totalling over 3,000,000 deliveries indicate no increased number of maternal deaths in hospitals in which, as a matter of policy, no therapeutic abortions were performed." [2] Needless to say, then, aside even from the question of morality, therapeutic abortion is to be rejected. No procedure, which of its very nature violates the basic law of medicine to preserve life and thereby carries with it such far-reaching implications, should be perpetuated in the face of grave doubts as to its necessity and when its validity lacks scientific support. In 1948, the World Health Organization in its declaration of Geneva stated: "I will maintain the utmost respect for human life from the time of conception; even under threat I will not use any medical knowledge contrary to the laws of humanity." Yet, it has been estimated that over 18,000 therapeutic abortions are performed each year in the United States.

The Moral Question. Pope Pius XII quite recently recalled the moral aspects of abortion. Addressing the Catholic Physicians' Congress in Rome, 1951, he stated: "Innocent human life, in whatever condition it is found, is withdrawn from the very first moment of its existence from any direct, deliberate attack. This is a fundamental right of a human person which is of general value in the Christian conception of life." But, he added, "On purpose, we have used always the expression 'direct attempt' on the life of an innocent person—direct killing, because, if for example, the saving of the life of the future mother, independently of her pregnancy, should urgently require a surgical act or other therapeutic treatment which would have as a necessary consequence in no way desired, nor intended, but inevitable, the death of the fetus, such an act could no longer be called a *direct* attempt on an innocent life. Under these conditions, the operation can be licit like other similar medical interventions, granted always that the good of high worth is concerned—such as life—and that it is not possible to postpone the operation until after the birth of the child nor to have recourse to other efficacious remedies."

[2] "The Status of Therapeutic Abortion in Modern Obstetrics"—R. J. Heffernan, M.D., and W. A. Lynch, M.D. American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology, August, 1953, Vol. 66, No. 2, p. 335, et sqq.

Sterilization

Sterilization means the deliberate destruction of the capacity to conceive. In the male this consists of a minor operation, the severing of what is known as the vas deferens. It is illicit. In the female it involves either ligation or tying of the Fallopian tubes, or castration—excision of the ovaries—or elimination of their function by X-ray. This may not be done as direct sterilizing procedure because it is a surgical act of permanent contraception. It *may* be done in cases where there are medical indications for the extirpation of these organs on medical grounds. Here the effect is indirect and is justifiable on the principle of the double effect recognized by moralists.

The archaic notion that sterilization is mandatory after 3 Cesarean section operations is erroneous. Since a repeat Cesarean section carries much less risk than the initial operation which usually was necessary for some critical complication, it is *not* necessary to ligate the tubes for the purpose of sterilization. Large series of case reports from Catholic hospitals have repeatedly shown that even five to eight Cesarean sections have been successfully done on the same patient. Moreover, it cannot now be denied that the prudent use of rhythm presents an adequate alternative solution to this problem.

Artificial Insemination

Another problem which arises during the course of infertility studies, particularly if the couple are under the care of a physician who does not share Catholic belief, is the problem of artificial insemination. Since it occasionally happens that a husband is completely sterile, the suggestion is made that the semen containing the spermatazoa obtained from someone other than the husband, a so-called "donor," be used. Obviously, in the eyes of the Church, this is considered test tube bastardy and has been explicitly condemned by her.

One of the cardinal principles of artificial insemination is that secrecy as to the donor of the semen must be maintained. In effect, this means that the scientifically conceived test-tube bastard is of undetermined and indeterminable paternity, nor can legal "semi-adoption" ever change the fact that he will forever be a stranger in his father's house. The Catholic physician need offer no apology for his refusal to initiate by any deliberate act the tragedy of a human being whose soul begins its earthly passage, handicapped at the outset by such an enormous source of melancholia. The obsessive maternal instinct of a childless wife in no way justifies a random sireless son. Such a

bizarre human being, finding himself a meaningless wanderer on the wasteland of time—never to know his true father nor to find his pride of lineage—might conceivably decide to terminate his artificially initiated life by suicide. Who would say that the physician who performed the act of donor insemination was free from moral guilt in planting this psychological time bomb? The Holy Father, defining the thought of the Church on artificial donor insemination (Pius XII, International Congress of Catholic Physicians, October 1, 1949), spoke with the wisdom of the ages when he reaffirmed the Christian belief that "to spouses alone is reserved the right of human procreation." *New things may be the scientist's role, but only God can make a soul.*

The Correct Use of the Rhythm Method of Selective Periodic Continence

It is a curious paradox that although most girls entering married life today will accept the advent of children as the greatest possible blessing upon their marriage, there are some who for serious financial reasons or housing difficulties feel constrained to postpone the arrival of their second or third child. There are still others who are extremely anxious lest they may never have a child of their own.

The major key to the solution of both of these marital problems in large measure revolves around the use, either in a positive or negative way, of those periods in the month which have been shown to be scientifically least and most fertile, respectively. Assuming, therefore, mutual consent and the approval of their confessors, it is the right and duty of the Catholic physician to explain as accurately as possible the application of the so-called rhythm method of periodic continence. Catholic spouses, on their part, do well to consult with their physician regarding this matter.

Biologic Basis of the Rhythm Theory. The biologic basis of the rhythm theory consists in the fact that, as a rule, only once a month is an ovum released from the ovary. It is fertilizable for twelve, or at most, twenty-four hours. Obviously, if coitus is avoided for seventy-two hours or more prior to the release of the ovum, there will be no available sperm in the tubes to fertilize it.

The exact time of the release of the ovum from the ovary is a difficult thing to determine. In general, it can be said, that if the menstrual interval is fairly regular—that is to say the number of days from the first day of one menstrual period to the first day of the next

menstrual period, one can usually calculate quite accurately the likely period of optimal fertility.

The simplest method, known as "calendar rhythm," involves the careful recording in writing of the intervals between and the dates of the menstrual periods for at least three or four months. If one averages the lengths of the intervals between periods for three or four months and then divides this average by two and substracts two days, one will have a fairly good working average of the likely day of ovulation. Intercourse should be avoided for five days before and five days after this day.

Concurrent Calculation of Ovulation Rhythm. However, greater accuracy will be obtained if one does not rely purely on menstrual rhythm as an index of ovulation rhythm, although there is a fairly constant relationship between the two. Calculation of any mathematical relation in which the constant lies in the future is obviously less scientific than concurrent calculation of the actual ovulation itself. Hence, when there are real medical reasons for the avoidance or postponement of pregnancy, it is necessary to supplement simple calendar rhythm by *concurrent calculation of ovulation rhythm.* This involves the careful recording of the basal temperature on awakening each morning.

If the temperature is taken by mouth before rising at the same time each morning, it will be found that in the early phase of the cycle immediately following the period, the temperature will run at subnormal levels, usually in the 97° range. At mid-cycle or approximately two weeks before the next expected period, there will occur a drop to the lowest temperature point of the month. Subsequent to that, there will be a rise over one or several days of the basal waking temperature. There may not necessarily be this drop. There may simply be a shift from a low level to a high level. If this shift occurs, ovulation is probably occurring for that month (although it has been shown that the shift may rarely occur without true ovulation). If, therefore, the pattern of recorded waking morning temperatures somewhat resembles a square root sign, $\sqrt{}$ ovulation usually has taken place by the time the plateau has been achieved. Certainly from observations made during surgery in infertility patients who had been carefully observing their basal temperature shifts by Dr. Doyle and a number of other investigators, it is now known that ovulation may precede the thermal shift by as many as three or four days and may follow the thermal shift by at least three days. A

careful review of the scientific literature in this field reveals no known pregnancies to have occurred beyond three days after the thermal shift. Accordingly, if patients will refrain from marital relationships until the thermal shift has been achieved (the plateau) for at least four or five days, the terminal late phase of the cycle—just before the next period—will offer a period of marked infertility. A review of the literature shows no known pregnancies occurring earlier than day five or later than day twenty-three of the regularly recurring cycles.

However, the immediate post-menstrual phase must be considered a period of dubious fertility. Certain changes which occur in the mucus exuding from the neck of the womb shortly after ovulation usually effectively prevent the sperm from migrating up into the uterus and tubes. Accordingly, a delay of three or five days beyond the achievement of the plateau will be accompanied by this physiologic secondary barrier to fertilization. Dr. Leo Latz reported a series of women to have had 54,027 relationships without the occurrence of a single pregnancy when basal temperature shifts and calendar calculations were utilized.[3]

As remarked before, this information regarding the rhythm can be used in a positive as well as a negative way. Scientific studies have yielded helpful information regarding fertile periods as well as infertile ones.

Childlessness

The problem of childlessness is one of the most poignant problems in married life today. The wife to whom parenthood has so far been denied considers her barrenness like a curse. Sadly, the Talmud says: "The barren are like the dead." There is within each one of us an intense desire to belong to the continuing stream of human life.

[3] For those who wish brief, but clear explanations of the rhythm theory, the following are recommended:

Articles: "The Concurrent Calculation of Ovulation Rhythm." J. B. Doyle, M.D.; *Linacre Quarterly,* St. Louis, Missouri, February, 1950; "A Plan for Parenthood." J. B. Doyle, M. D.; *Linacre Quarterly,* May, 1954.

Books: The Rhythm. Leo Latz, 6th Ed., 1950. Latz Foundation, Chicago, Ill.; *Natural Child Spacing.* 1st Ed., M. Edward Davis, 1953, Hanover House, Garden City, N. Y.

From this great yearning of the human heart have sprung filial devotion, racial pride and patriotism itself. If, after a year of married life with normal relationships, no pregnancy has ensued, it would be wise for both husband and wife to seek the advice of a specialist in gynecology. God does not necessarily will permanent childlessness to any couple. In His ordinary providence, He usually helps those who help themselves. Yet, many of these young people, through ignorance or false modesty, are reluctant to seek relief. Youth is the talisman of fertility. Late marriage and delay in seeking fertility studies have resulted in a tragic loss of precious years of opportunity for many people. Neither partner in a marriage is necessarily to blame; both may be in some measure at fault. Male pride which often confuses infertility with impotence prevents many couples from even beginning fertility studies.

Use of the Cervical Spoon Permitted. Understandably, Catholic husbands resent requests for semen samples when the request in non-Catholic clinics involves the use of masturbation or coitus interruptus. These methods are contrary to the natural law and therefore morally wrong. This is perhaps one of the major reasons why every Catholic hospital should have its own fertility clinic. Since 1948, there has been available to husbands, a method of semen sampling which reputable Catholic theologians agree is entirely consonant with moral law and the teachings of the Church. This is a small plastic spoon, called the cervical spoon, which is inserted in the vagina beneath the cervix to act as a plastic lining for the vagina and an open receptacle for the seminal pool. It is removed 30 minutes after coitus, allowing ample time for much of the sperm to have passed into the cervix. The contents of the spoon are then deposited in a small jar for transport to the doctor's office for study. With this major moral problem out of the way, the rest of the studies involved in infertility assay present no moral problem.

An Involved Matter. It is an extravagant hope which expects a solution of this problem in one or two visits. Careful physical examination, blood studies, including the Rh test, thyroid test (basal metabolic rate) are essential. Simple office tests which do not cause pain, such as passage of dioxide gas through the tubes and the microscopic examination of endometrium and of the mucus from the cervix subsequent to a marital relationship the previous night constitute the backbone of a fertility study. Since there is an almost even chance that a given couple will achieve their own baby, we would be remiss

indeed if we did not point out that if we will only till the barren ground, it will be easier for the Author of life to plant the seed.

Nursing the Child. Great numbers of women no longer nurse their children. From a psychological viewpoint, this is unfortunate to both mother and child. It is an important factor in developing in the child a sense of security and in developing in both mother and child the normal natural love that should be theirs. So important is contact between mother and child it is even advocated that the mother hold the child when it is bottle-fed instead of simply letting it lie in its crib.

From the physical viewpoint, there is no question that artificial feeding of the child according to modern infant nutrition standards has real advantages over breast-feeding alone. Hence it should not be neglected. Yet, at the same time, at least token breast-feeding should be continued, both to obtain its psychological benefits for the mother and the child and to pass over to the infant immune bodies that are to its advantage.

QUESTIONS

1. *What are the signs that indicate that conception has taken place?*
2. *What precautions are essential for the pregnant woman?*
3. *Should therapeutic abortion be rejected even aside from moral considerations?*
4. *What is the correct moral teaching regarding abortion?*
5. *What is meant by sterilization? Is a direct sterilizing procedure morally permissible?*
6. *Is it true that premarital and marital continence overtax the nervous system and lead to unhappiness in marriage?*
7. *What is the biologic basis of the rhythm theory?*
8. *Explain what is meant by the Farris Formula.*
9. *Explain what is meant by the concurrent calculation of ovulation rhythm.*
10. *Is the doctor able to correct cases of infertility or childlessness?*
11. *Are there advantages to child and mother in breast feeding?*

The Home

The Child's Primeval School

LESSON X

X

THE HOME—THE CHILD'S PRIMEVAL SCHOOL

FROM time immemorial the home has been the child's primary school. It is still that today. Other schools may help the home; but they cannot take its place. Other teachers and instructors can help the parents; but they cannot fully substitute for them. The home is the school of schools. The parent is, and must remain, the teacher of teachers. "That education will as a rule be more effective and lasting," wrote Pope Pius XII in his encyclical on *The Christian Education of Youth,* "which is received in a well-ordered and well-disciplined Christian family." This is how the Author of nature has disposed matters. And while there may indeed be those at times who fail to recognize the fact, and even those who deny it outright, it remains a fact nonetheless. To go counter to it and all that it implies for the child, can only lead to harm and a real measure of failure.

A great American churchman, James Cardinal Gibbon, expressed this view in the following words: "The home is the primeval school. It is the best, the most hallowed, and the most potential of all the academies; and the parent, especially the mother, is the first, the most influential and the most cherished of all teachers. The education of the child should begin at the mothers knee" (*The Christian Home*).

An all-embracing education provided. It is in this school, based on love and devotion, that the child normally gets his first essential lessons of life under the guidance and care of his divinely appointed teachers, his parents. And it is an education that is all-embracing. For there his physical needs are given attention, his personality is shaped, his character is formed for good or ill. There his parents supervise his physical and mental growth, his moral and emotional and religious development. There he advances in wisdom and grace before God and man.

Only good homes are successful homes. Not all homes, however, actually give the training they should provide. That is true only of good homes. Nor are all parents successful educators. That is true only of parents who are truly zealous and who are properly prepared

for their tasks. It cannot be assumed that a home, by the mere fact that it happens to be a home will in some mysterious fashion prove itself an effective instrument for the proper training of children. It cannot be assumed that a home will produce satisfactory results in the field of child training irrespective of all efforts or ability on the part of the father and mother who preside over it. It will do that only if parents are properly prepared for their tasks of child training in the home and if they faithfully fulfill their duties towards their little ones in this regard.

Obviously it is these facts that Pope Pius XII had in mind when, in speaking to a group of Italian mothers and teachers at Rome, he cautioned them with these words: "It is not enough to be conscious of an obligation and to have the desire to discharge it; it is necessary to render onself capable of discharging it competently" (Allocution of November 26, 1941, *Davanti a questa*). It is clear His Holiness meant, by these words, to impress upon those whom he was addressing the need for serious preparation on their part for the difficult work of the child's education. Beyond the shadow of a doubt, if parents are to meet this obligation adequately and successfully, it is necessary both that they take the task seriousy and that they devote to the subject of child training the thought and attention and meticulous preparation that it deserves.

The Field of Parent Education

The field of parent education or child training in the home is an enormous one. Also, it is a difficult and complex one. It cannot be covered even superficially here. At best but a limited introduction can be given to it. But, to be sure, even that can have genuine value, and should therefore not be neglected. It can induce prospective parents to begin thinking and observing and studying for themselves. Happily, even by leisurely perusal of the excellent printed material alone that is available in this field today can they gather much information that will later on prove invaluable to them in their child training tasks.

Probably the most satisfactory way of dealing with the extensive subject of child care and training in the home in the limited space that can be given it here is to suggest a few general considerations, and indicate several practical rules that may be followed by parents. No attempt will be made to lay down definite regulations. There are no satisfactory ones in this field.

Every Phase of Child Training Should be Given Attention. It might, first of all, well be said that all phases of child training should be given attention. In the address of Pope Pius XII to mothers and teachers to which reference has already been made (*Davanti a questa*), the Supreme Pontiff said that "education consists essentially in pre-preparing now for what he (the child) must be and for what he must do here below in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created." The words suggest a complete education, one that neglects no phase of child training. And, indeed, in the course of his address His Holiness distinguished between training of the mind and of the character, of the heart and of the will. Nor did he fail to mention physical care. That, too, calls for parental attention. There is much meaning in the old dictum, "A sound mind in a sound body." One might argue, of course, that some phases of education are more important than others. But the fact remains that all are important—the religious and the moral, the mental, the physical and the emotional.

The True Purpose of Child Discipline Must Serve as Guide. Discipline is a highly important factor in the training of the child. But it must be true discipline. Such discipline might be defined as a system of external control that has for its ultimate purpose the establishment of a reasonable inner or self-control on the part of the little one. Taken in this correct sense, discipline is in perfect harmony with the true purpose of child training, namely, the progressive development of self-control on the part of the individual child. This leads to inner conformity to proper standards of conduct, to the growth of inner attitudes that teach him to live in harmony with his fellow man, both in and outside the home, and that eventually become an integral part of his character.

Much thought and attention should be given this matter by those entrusted with the care of children. In the hustle and bustle of everyday life even fathers and mothers may come to lose sight of the prime purpose of discipline at times and substitute for it quite secondary aims. For example, they may look to their own comfort and convenience rather than to the proper development of the child's character. Or again, they may consider immediate response to their arbitrary commands more important than a wholesome spirit of cooperation on the part of the little one. Unfortunately, such practices will readily prove utterly futile as a preparation for a socially well-adjusted and normally independent and self-controlled child. What is more, they may well

prove distinctly harmful because of the emotional attitude to which they give rise or because of the habits which they fix in the little one's life.

A Happy Medium Must Be Observed. If the true purpose of parental discipline or guidance is to be attained, certain features must characterize those who administer it. Perhaps more than all else must parental attitudes and actions be characterized by normalcy. That is to say, parents must prudently follow a middle-of-the-road course and not incline toward extremes. They must be neither too severe nor too lenient. It may be assumed that, as a rule, extremes are not right in child training. A middle-of-the-road course, regularly followed, will lead them more directly and certainly than will any other toward the true goal of child training. Unfortunately, practice in this regard by no means always agrees with theory. Only too frequently does the child meet with excessive punishment, ceaseless bickering, endless restrictions and continuous commands on the one hand, and laxity, over-indulgence and a catering to his whims and wishes on the other. Such methods do not conform to the true goal of child training.

Consistency is Essential in the Little One's Training. Also shooting wide of the true goal of discipline or child training is an unwholesome combination of parental attitudes of rigidity and laxity or of an imprudent union of severity and license. Here we find the inconsistent parent. He is spasmodic or vacillating in his dealings with his children. He gives no forethought to his decisions, makes no attempt at systematic discipline, follows neither rule nor reason in giving rewards or punishments. Indeed, the only guide he follows is the whim or the convenience of the moment. It should be quite unnecessary to say that such a system of discipline, or rather such an utter lack of system in applying disciplinary measures, will not lead to the true goal of child training. Quite to the contrary, it will prove harmful rather than beneficial to the little one.

Contact With the Child Needed. A very considerable measure of contact between parent and child is necessary if the former is really to exert the influence over the latter that is rightfully expected of him. There can be no training of a child at a distance. Genuine training calls for repeated correction or admonition, for praise or blame, as the case may demand, in many actual situations in life that come up at work or play during the course of the day. Where there is limited togetherness of parent and child, or limited shared activity at work or play, that is not possible. Nor is the far-reaching and all-important

influence of example possible where contact between parent and child is lacking.

It is in this connection that we see the harm that has been done by the extensive shift from the simpler life of the more rural days in America to the highly complex civilization of our present large cities. Shared work and play activities are far fewer in cities than in the country. Under a rural type of civilization such activities were abundantly at hand and were more or less automatically provided. Under city conditions they must be consciously planned for. If that is not done, and even in studied fashion, there will be but very limited contact between parent and child through shared activities.

Parental Contact and the Child's Emotional Life. In the foregoing we had primarily in mind, in speaking of contact between parent and child, the matter of discipline in the latter's life. But there is another consideration, too. The proper development of the child's emotional life or the balanced development of his personality also depends much on it. No one except the parent can supply those intangible sentiments which provide the spirit that makes the home a home and that so intensely influence the young. Children reared in an institution show this. The emotional life of not a few of them suffers as a result of a lack of parental contact. Any of a number of abnormalities may develop. It is safe to say that no artifice of the social scientist, no new type of institution or community agency, can replace the family relationship as a medium for developing and integrating the human personality.

It should be emphasized that contact with both parents is essential to the child. Otherwise, he will be half-orphaned, so to speak, and the half orphan may suffer just as certainly as the child who is deprived of both a father and a mother. The reason for this is simply that the responses of the child are conditioned somewhat differently to the father and the mother. Consequently, an abnormal lack of contact with either is likely to bring about a one-sided development of his emotional reactions. If, therefore, a home is to provide a truly normal environment for a child both parents must exert an influence within the family circle. This is not to say, however, that their influence must be altogether equal. The fact is that the mother is commonly the greater source of influence over the child, particularly during the earliest years of his life. In this fact we can see the great harm that can result from the employment of mothers of young children outside the home.

Parental Affection and the Child's Emotional Life. Of all the elements that go to make up the child's world and influence his emotional development, the most important is affection. No other single factor can do so much to enrich the child's personality. It is really the first essential to his world. Without it the home hearth cannot provide the feeling of security and confidence, the sense of fellowship and mutual sympathy which is so vital to the little one's proper development. Without it there is a void which subsequent events cannot wholly fill.

Here, too, however, a happy medium is needed. There can be too much and too little affection. Moderation must be the rule. If such is not the case, the purposes for which affection is intended will be defeated. Extremes in regard to it will lead to various unfortunate results in the child. Such are, for instance, emotional instability, excessive shyness or excessive boldness—depending on the character of the little one. Or again, it may lead to feelings of inferiority or feelings of superiority, to jealousy, a negativistic attitude, or immoderate demands for attention. These things are unfortunate. They do not result from affection moderately shown the child.

The Child's Physical Development. Highly important for the child, too, is his normal physical development. For this he depends much on his parents, particularly in the first months, and even in the first years of his life. Their natural love for him will normally induce them to protect and shield him from harm, to nourish him, to watch with keenest interest every step in his physical growth. They cannot depend merely on the dictates of nature in this connection. Acquired knowledge is necessary. Many a serious slip may occur between the first cry at birth, or even before that time, and the final stage of development of the individual's physical mechanism. Nature may fail the little one in many different ways. Progress in growth may be abnormal. Defects of the senses and of various organs of the body may show themselves. A variety of diseases may rack the body and ruin the health of the individual. To cope with the threatening situations that may arise, parents should prepare well in advance for their tasks. They should inform themselves about such matters as the following: the chief norms of growth; the main factors that contribute to normal development; the outstanding defects and diseases that may show themselves in the young child, and the proper measures that make for their cure and prevention. Assuredly, too, they should be able to judge when the child needs the attention of a physician.

It is quite impossible to discuss all such matters here. But it should not be too early for those who are looking toward marriage in the near future to give the field of the physical care and training of the child some attention. Happily, they can accomplish much in this regard by individual reading or by group study. There is available today in this field not a little truly excellent and inexpensive literature that can be very helpful to them. Mention might be made particularly in this connection of the following publications: *Your Child's World,* a miniature book of 176 pages, available both through the Paulist Press, 401 West 59th Street, New York 19, N. Y., and the Family Life Bureau, National Catholic Welfare Conference, 1312 Massachusetts Avevnue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.; and *Prenatal Care; Infant Care; Your Child From One to Six,* bulletins of the Children's Bureau, U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Washington 25, D. C.

The Child's Religious Training a Noble Parental Task. The religious training of the child, too, is a matter that demands the studied attention of parents. They obtain graces through the sacrament of matrimony for the fulfilment of this important task. It is well to recall here once more the words by which Pope Pius XII referred to this in his encyclical on *The Mystical Body*: "Through matrimony, in which the contracting parties are themselves ministers of grace to one another, provision is made for the external and duly regulated increase of the Christian society, and what is of greater importance, for the correct religious instruction of children without which the Mystical Body would be in grave danger." Those words clearly refer to the priestly office of parents, the religious training of their children. Fathers and mothers are, as we saw, the first teachers of their little ones. And of most outstanding importance in their teaching are the truths of religion, since the very purpose of the children's coming into this world is the eventual attainment of eternal union with God. These truths the parents must teach them according to their ability to learn at different age periods. They must teach them the life and truths of Christ. They must teach them the laws of God.

The Mother's Role a Commanding One in this Connection. Both father and mother have a role to play in the child's religious training. But certainly the mother's part is a particularly vital one. Her nearness to him and her maternal love for him on the one hand, and the child's unbounded confidence in her on the other, place her in a truly commanding position in regard to this task. No priest can speak to the child as can the mother in his early years.

The content of what the mother should teach the children at various age periods cannot be given here. But let it at least be said that, in instructing the little ones, she should unfailingly impress upon them the fact that in the Christian home the father, by virtue of his position and his prerogatives, has great dignity and merits high respect on their part. Let her also teach them the reasons for this, namely, that he represents Christ at the head of their home, that the authority that he exercises within the family circle reflects the authority of God, and that he is the likeness of the Heavenly Father. Often should the mother allude to these facts. So, too, should she give the children to understand that, under the Christian dispensation the mother represents Holy Mother Church. Parents may be confident that, where such basic ideals have been effectively taught the little ones from their earliest years, their proper training is assured.

Parental Example and the Child's Religious Training. In the child's religious training in the home, example is of special importance. Particularly is this true in his early years. At that time practical example is much more influential than verbal instruction or preachment. At all events, verbally to teach the child religious truths, and then to neglect their practice, or even to act contrary to them in the home, would assuredly be to leave much to be desired in his religious upbringing. It is the actual living of the faith by the father who represents Christ, and the mother who represents the Church that is the key to success in the highly important task of their joint priestly office of teaching religion to their children. Even though the parents may themselves not fully understand how it is brought about, they may rest assured that simple family devotions in the home and, no less, little religious rituals in the family circle will be remembered for a lifetime, and will exercise an undying influence over the little ones' lives. There is every reasonable hope for the future religious life of a child who in his early years within the family sanctuary was warmed, so to speak, with human parental love combined with love divine, and who was inspired and guided by the shining light of faith reflected from his parents' countenance and manifested through their daily lives within the home.

The Powerful Aid of the Church. It is, of course, to state a commonplace to add that the Church helps with the religious education of the young. With baptism they become also children of Holy Mother Church. And the Church is the official teacher of religion. However, it must be noted that in this connection, too, the parents have an obligation. That is, they must cooperate with the Church

by seeing to it that the children really receive the instructions that the Church provides. They must also do their share of teaching, and must carefully prepare themselves for this grave task.

Pope Pius XII discussed this important matter in his address alluded to, given to Catholic Mothers and Teachers at Rome. Here are his words: "But in the great work of the Christian Education of your sons and daughters you well understand that training in the home, however wise, however thorough, is not enough. It needs to be supplemented and perfected by the powerful aid of religion. From the moment of baptism the priest possesses the authority of a spiritual father and pastor over your children, and you must cooperate with him in teaching them those first rudiments of catechism and piety which are the only basis of a solid education, and of which you, the earliest teachers of your children, ought to have a sufficient and sure knowledge. You cannot teach them what you do not know yourselves. Teach them to love God, to love Christ, to love our Mother the Church and the pastors of the Church who are your guides. Love the catechism and teach your children to love it; it is the great handbook of the love and fear of God, of Christian wisdom and eternal life." Both father and mother should deem it a particularly great privilege to help prepare the child for his First Communion.

The Help of the Parish School. Insofar as the schooling of the child is concerned, there is a clear obligation on the part of parents to see to it that he receives the benefit of a Catholic schooling where that is at all feasible. Both the general law of the Church and her special legislation for the United States specifically refer to this. The general law states that Catholic children are not to attend non-Catholic or neutral schools. It adds that it is for the bishop of the diocese to determine under what circumstances and under what safeguards an exception might be made (Can. 134). As to the law for the United States, the words of the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore read: "All Catholic parents are bound to send their children to the parochial schools, unless either at home or in other Catholic schools, they may sufficiently and evidently provide for the Christian education of their children, or unless it be lawful to send them to other schools on account of a sufficient cause approved by the bishop and with opportune caution and remedies."

However, even when children attend parochial schools, their parents continue to have personal educational obligations toward them. As a matter of fact, they remain the prime teachers. Their home remains

the children's school of schools. For the parish school is in no sense meant to be a substitute for the home. It is only an extension of the home.

The State and Education

The Catholic parent should be informed about the place that the State has in the field of education. At times there are governments that trespass upon the rights of parents in this regard, usurping those rights in no small measure. There have been instances of this in in the past. There are instances in our own day. The matter was not a little to the fore in Pope Leo XIII's time, for instance, and that Supreme Pontiff warned against it for the good of the family. Thus, in his encyclical *On the Condition of the Working Classes,* he said: "The State must not absorb the individual or the family; both should be allowed free and untrammeled action so far as is consistent with the common good and the interests of others." Then stating that "the family has at least equal rights with the State in the choice and pursuit of things needful to its preservation and its just liberty," His Holiness went on to explain his words as follows: "We say 'at least equal right,' for inasmuch as the domestic household is antecedent, as well in idea as in fact, to the gathering of men in a community, the family must necessarily have rights and duties which are prior to the community and founded more immediately in nature." He added: "If the citizens of a State—in other words, the families—on entering into association and fellowship were to experience at the hands of the State hindrance instead of help, and were to find their rights attacked instead of upheld, that association (the State) would rightly be an object of detestation rather than of desire."

Supreme Pontiffs since that time have reiterated the same teaching, particularly in the face of the extreme encroachments of States on the rights of families that showed themselves under Nazism and Communism. Pope Pius XI, for instance, wrote as follows: "The family holds directly from the Creator the mission and hence the right to educate the offspring, a right inalienable because inseparably joined to the strict obligation, a right anterior to any right whatever of civil authority and of the State; and therefore inviolable on the part of any power on earth" (*The Christian Education of Youth*).

The State exists for the family, and not the family for the State. That is the essence of the correct view. It is the view parents should always stand ready to uphold. Happily, insofar as the parents' right over the education of their children is concerned, the law of our

land is, all in all, on their side. The State of Oregon once questioned that right, demanding that parents send their children to public schools. The Supreme Court of the United States ruled against its stand on the matter, upholding the traditional view—a view grounded in the natural law—that "the child is not the mere creature of the State."

To be sure, the State can insist on a measure of education for the child that is in harmony with the common good. But it cannot force a particular type of education upon him. It is for his parents to decide the type of education that is to be given him.

Excessive Delegation of Family Activities a Modern Danger

There is presently in this country more danger from parents delegating family activities excessively to a varied number of agencies than there is from state encroachment upon their rights. This danger is very real. Agencies are being made a substitute for the family first in one particular activity, then in another, and again in still another. The eventual result may well turn out to be that parents, instead of being at the steering gear in their home, will find themselves merely a sort of useless fifth wheel.

It is a secular sociologist who has given us the following timely warning regarding this danger of our day:

> "With almost a menacing eagerness, agencies organized to supplement family activities have grasped at the chance to take up responsibilities which parents seem desirous of escaping. Established to meet cases of neglectful or incompetent parents, the agencies develop standardized and relatively efficient methods of dealing with children. These are advertised and used as propaganda to secure support for the growing equipment, needs, and program of the agency. Parents who find it comfortable to shift their responsibility to an organization accept the dictum that parents are ignorant and do not properly understand child psychology and the needs of children. They further are inclined to assume that parents are not only ignorant, but cannot learn. Hence, we find an ever-increasing number and an ever-increasing demand for boys' clubs, girls' clubs, pre-school nurseries, ad infinitum — a frantic effort to save babies from their parents. And in turn we find large numbers of young people growing up with attitudes rather excellent in patches who lack a balanced emotional life. In speaking of this growing tendency to shift responsibility to the school, Ernest R. Groves said, 'Children who become emotional orphans stranded between an abridged parenthood and an impersonal school will carry through life a socially dangerous void' " (Elmer, M. C., *The Sociology of the Family*). The words speak for themselves. They hardly exaggerate.

Parenthood, a Most Important and Exalted Profession

In view of the fact that the child's training depends so extensively on the father and mother, parenthood can only be looked upon as a most important profession. Certainly under Christianity it has always been recognized as such. St. John Chrysostom, for instance, who lived in the early Christian centuries, spoke of it in most glowing terms. He contrasted it with that of the artist, the painter and sculptor, and pronounced it immeasurably greater. Nor is it any wonder. Artists work with paint and marble, parents with flesh and blood, with spirit. The former produce masterpieces of canvas and stone. The products of the latter are living human beings—spiritual beings destined one day to enjoy the Beatific Vision of God in Heaven. It must be both consoling and inspiring for Catholic fathers and mothers to realize that by their faithful and prudent guidance they can, under God, mold souls ornamented with sanctifying grace, fit one day even to appear in the presence of the Godhead.

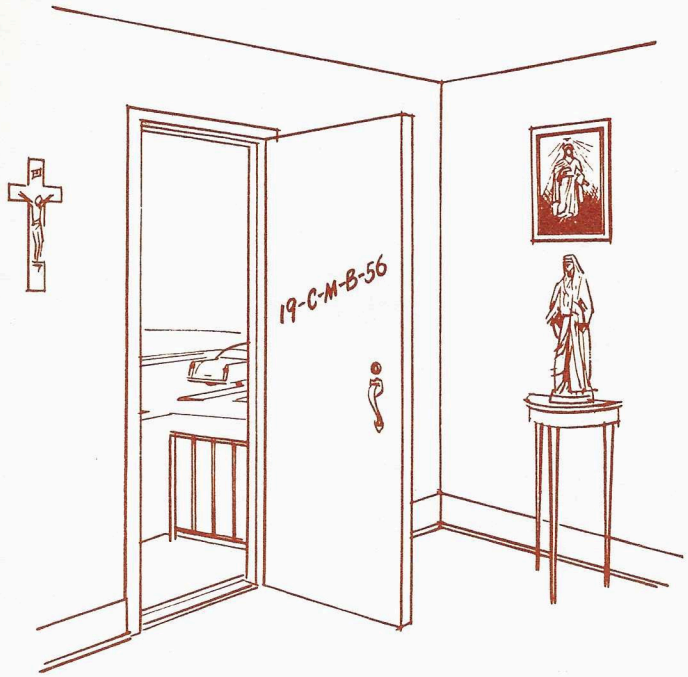
The nobility of their tasks should be a constant reminder to parents of the profound personal holiness their office demands of them. And it should induce those looking forward to marriage to prepare for its tasks with all the zeal and energy of which they are capable.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *Are all parents successful educators of their children?*
2. *Mention the various phases of the child's training.*
3. *What is the true purpose of child discipline?*
4. *Are extremes in child training to be approved?*
5. *Is consistency on the part of parents essential in the training of the child?*
6. *Explain why contact between parent and child is necessary for the proper training of the child.*
7. *Show the relation between parental affection and the child's emotional life.*
8. *Mention some things in the field of the child's physical development that deserve attention on the part of parents.*
9. *Why is the mother's role a particularly commanding one in the religious training of the child?*
10. *Indicate the role of parental example in the child's religious training.*
11. *What is the role of the Church in teaching religious truth to children? Must parents use the help of the parish school?*
12. *What place, if any, does the State hold in the child's education?*
13. *Is there danger of excessive delegation of family activities to public and private agencies today?*
14. *Why is it maintained that parenthood is a highly important and exalted profession?*

Your Home



A Church in Miniature

LESSON XI

XI

YOUR HOME—A CHURCH IN MINIATURE

CATHOLIC couples looking toward marriage must also look beyond. They must look to the building of a truly Christian home, and they must prepare themselves for it. To this end, they should bring themselves to realize that as husbands and wives, as fathers and mothers, they will be members of the lay priesthood and that as such they will have duties that they did not have before. They should look forward to building their homes into little churches. They should be keenly aware of the full meaning of the words of the Psalmist, "Unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." That is always necessary, of course. But it calls for very special attention in the secularized civilization in which they must live today. The antidote for that secularism is religion. And, insofar as the home is concerned, the antidote is in no small part religion in the family circle. This should open a field for action that will capture the imagination of young folks looking toward marriage. It should stand as a challenge to their finest zeal and highest ambitions.

Religion in Church and Home

The Catholic well understands that the Church is the divinely constituted organized expression of religion, and that it is to her that we look in the first instance for guidance and help in the field of religion. He knows that through her sacraments, through the Mass, through a variety of devotions, promoted by her duly ordained priests, she brings man into relation with God and channels out to him the redemptive waters of salvation. Hence it is not surprising to him that the encyclical on *Christian Marriage* speaks with special approval of "pastors of souls" who zealously seek to develop a fervent religious life in their married parishioners. "Quite fittingly, therefore, and quite in accordance with the defined norm of Christian sentiment do those pastors of souls act," reads the document, "who, to prevent married couples from failing in the observance of God's law, urge them to perform their duty and exercise their religion so that they should give

themselves to God, continually ask His divine assistance, frequent the sacraments, and always nourish and preserve a loyal and thoroughly sincere devotion to God." Surely the words also apply to young folks looking forward to marriage. They should seek to appreciate to the full the help the Church can give them in the tasks that lie ahead in their future married life.

However, they must not look upon religion merely as a matter of their parish church and the ministrations of their pastors. On the contrary, they must look upon it also as a matter of the home. Indeed, they must aim to make of their homes at least in some measure replicas of their parish church. They must seek, in the words of St. John Chrysostom, to make them "churches in miniature."

The Priesthood of Parents

An important step toward this is a realization on the part of husband and wife, of father and mother, that they are members of the priesthood of the faithful, that they are in a real sense meant to be priests in their family circle. This is a teaching that is indicated in Holy Writ, in the liturgy, and in the tradition and practice of the Church. As noted elsewhere, the parties of the marriage contract themselves administer the sacrament of matrimony. In other words, they administer grace to each other. It can correctly be said that they start a flow of grace to which they will have a title for the remainder of their lives. But to do that, as was also indicated, is to perform a priestly function. Hence, at the very beginning of their family life, they exercise the characteristic priestly function of conferring grace.

Again, since the Christian home is rightly called a church in miniature, that suggests that religious rituals, devotional exercises—priestly functions, in other words—are in place within its walls. And, as history tells us, good Christian homes have traditionally been characterized by religious devotions and rituals. It is a tradition that should be kept very much alive today.

The Father as Priest. That the husband and father has priestly functions to perform in the home should appear obvious from the fact that in the Christian family, which is a miniature replica of the Mystical Body of Christ, the Church, he represents Christ at the head of the home. And Christ was sent by the Father to exercise priestly functions, to have the care or guardianship of souls. Specifically, He was sent to perform these priestly functions: 1) to teach the people or make known to them the truths of God; 2) to intercede for them; that is, to pray for them to the Almighty; 3) to sanctify them or

make them holy. These, therefore, should be functions of the father in the home.

It must not be overlooked, however, that, while St. Paul teaches that the father represents Christ in the home, he indicates at the same time that the mother represents the Church. Hence she, too, very logically may be expected to have certain priestly functions to perform. One can hardly conceive of a Church without priests and priestly functions. In fact, what can be said of the father as priest and as representative of Christ at the head of the home must also hold, in great measure at least, of the mother. There are several reasons for this. For instance, the duties or functions of the two in the home, while not indeed absolutely identical, are nonetheless most closely related. They are, certainly for the most part, joint duties. Again there is the fact that even as Christ and His Church are one, so also do husband and wife, who respectively represent Christ and His Church, form a unity in marriage. They have the same goals to strive for. They have joint duties to perform in the Mystical Body of Christ.

The Priestly Office of Teacher. Pope Pius XII has very specifically referred, in his encyclical on the *Mystical Body of Christ,* to one of these joint offices of the spouses in the home. He there points out that matrimony implies a solemn consecration of the married partners to a joint *teaching* office in the Church. "Through matrimony," he says, "in which the contracting parties are ministers of grace to one another, provision is made for the external and duly regulated increase of the Christian society, and what is of greater importance, for the correct religious instruction of children, without which the Mystical Body would be in grave danger." Those words clearly indicate one of the main priestly offices of parents, namely, the teaching or instructing of their children in their religion. They, the two of them, are the children's first teachers. And of most outstanding importance in this connection is the teaching of the truths of religion.

Important indeed is this priestly office of teaching of parents. As Pope Pius XII has pointed out, without it "the Mystical Body of Christ would be in grave danger." But highly important, too, are the other priestly functions of parents, those of interceding and sanctifying. Countless children, we may be sure, have been kept to the path of virtue, or have been brought back to it, through the intercessory prayers of their fathers and mothers. Perhaps the most striking example of this in history is that of St. Augustine, brought back to the path of virtue by the prayers of his mother, St. Monica. And so, too, have many

others been hallowed by the graces to which their parents received title when they ministered to each other the sacrament of matrimony.

Not Ordained Priests. It should be needless to say that the powers of parents, as members of the lay priesthood, are not equal to those of the ordained priest and consecrated bishop. They cannot, for instance, teach officially for the Church. Nor, again, can they consecrate, or administer certain sacraments. Nonetheless, great indeed are their priestly functions. And they lend superb dignity to the parental office.

Building a Church in Miniature

Now, it is for these highly favored members of the lay priesthood to build their homes into churches in miniature. By doing that they will be following the traditional practice of the Church. History tells us that in earlier Christian times the Catholic home was in fact looked upon as a church in miniature. We find the term "little church" (*ecclesiola*) applied to it by St. John Chrysostom in the early centuries of the Church's existence. St. Benedict, who lived a short time later than St. John Chrysostom applied much the same term to the home of his monastic family. He called this home of his religious a "house of God."

In the strongly Catholic times, commonly referred to as the ages of faith, that followed the days of St. John Chrysostom and St. Benedict, Christian homes were in a real sense "houses of God" or "churches in miniature," the father serving as priest therein, and all the family members participating in the devotional exercises that were carried out. Francis Aidan Cardinal Gasquet, O.S.B., has given us a word picture of such a Christian home or "little church" that illustrates the point. It may well be recalled here as an example and to serve as an inspiration for both the married and those contemplating marriage in our own day. The description is found in an address he gave two or three decades ago on "Christian Family Life in Pre-Reformation England." Particularly to the point are the following words:

> Work was everywhere insisted upon as necessary in God's service, and work was savored, so to speak, by the remembrance of God's presence. The two orders of the natural and supernatural were not so separated as they are generally supposed to be today. Of course, there are many in our day who no doubt keep themselves in God's presence, but whilst I believe that most will agree that this is the exception, in the ages of faith it was apparently the rule. And if we may judge from books of instruction and other evidence, God was not far removed from the threshold of most Catholic families in pre-reformation days. Of course, there were exceptions, and many perhaps led as wicked lives as today, but there is obviously something about the family life of that time which is lacking in this. There was the constant recognition of God's sanctifying presence in the family. Of this I have spoken, and over and above this there were those common religious practices of prayer and self-restraint and mutual encouragement to virtue of which alas the modern counterpart of the old English home knows so little. On the faith of those simple and generally unlettered people there was a bloom—I know of no other word to express what I see—which perished as one of the results of the religious revolution of the sixteenth century.

Those words should be a great challenge to young men and women looking forward to marriage and the building of Christian homes. It should be their holy ambition to reverse the modern trend to which Cardinal Gasquet alluded, and bring God back into the home. They should aim from the very beginning, as we have said, to build their own homes into churches in miniature.

How, specifically, can they go about this? How can it be accomplished? The possibilities are really legion. But perhaps the following are among the more outstanding and promising ones: 1) using religious expressions in the family circle; 2) encouraging the use of the sacramentals in the home; 3) celebrating religious anniversaries or milestones in the family; 4) adapting the spiritual life of the family to the liturgical year. These, together with ordinary daily prayers in common in the home, can all serve to keep God and the things of God before the minds and in the hearts of the family members.

1. The Use of Religious Expressions

It has long been the custom of Catholic peoples to use the name of God and other religious expressions reverently and respectfully in their daily conversation. Immigrants from Catholic countries who have come to the United States have usually brought this custom with them. But very often, in two or three generations, they have lost it. It is important that the custom be restored to our homes. And there is no reason why this cannot be done. Catholic couples, therefore, looking toward marriage and the building of their homes should resolve to make the practice a part of their daily family life. It has real spiritual significance, simple though the practice may be. It can exert a far-reaching influence for good over family members. Such expressions keep the thought of God and the things of God in the home always. They help make it truly "a house of God."

There are many examples of these expressions still found among some families. The following are some of them: "Praised be Jesus Christ"; "God reward you"; "Thank God"; "Thanks be to God"; "God's Will be done"; "Our Lady, Help me." They represent the proper way to use the name of God in a Christian home. Family members should diligently make use of them.

2. The Use of Sacramentals

The sacramentals, too, should definitely find a place in the Catholic family circle. There are a number of reasons for this. Many of them have a direct bearing on family life. Not a few, in fact, were specifically instituted for use in the home. Furthermore, they are a relatively simple but, at the same time, highly important means of union between the altar and the home, and as such are a medium for keeping the spirit of secularism from the home. Again, they are so many media for channeling from the one great spiritual reservoir given into the Church's keeping, the living and transforming waters of grace from the Savior's fountains.

Blessings and Blessed Articles. The sacramentals, also sometimes called the "little sacraments," consist of blessings and blessed articles. They are, for instance, the blessing the priest gives, the blessing we give ourselves as we devoutly make the sign of the cross, the blessing parents give their children. They are holy water, the blessed medal we may wear on our person or have in our home or our auto, the blessed pictures we may have on the walls of our home. They are the wedding ring blessed by the Church on the day it was placed on the bride's finger before the altar. And so, a great number of other sacramentals could be mentioned, all of which can play a highly important role in bringing God into our homes, into our daily family life. For the benefit of those looking toward marriage and a home of their own, attention may well be called here in some detail to a number that are particularly suited to that church in miniature, the home. Some of these are for the house or dwelling-place itself and its various appurtenances, some are for the members of the family that dwell therein.

Holy Water. Holy water, for instance, is a sacramental that should be on hand in every Catholic home. Actually, the formula that the Church uses in blessing it reads as if it were particularly meant for home use. "Whatever it sprinkles in the homes of the faithful," it reads in part, "be it cleansed and delivered from harm." It can be

blessed by a priest at any time, but customarily it is blessed on Sunday morning before the main parish Mass. That is, it is blessed for the Asperges. After it has been blessed, some of it should be kept in a place where it is available to the parishioners, so they can take it in containers to their homes. There are normally a number of opportunities to make use of it in the home during the course of the day. If used regularly in the evening, for instance, for the blessing of the children before they retire, the practice will be a consistent reminder to keep a supply in the home.

Blessing of the House. The home itself or dwelling place should be blessed. A church or chapel is always blessed before it is used. The same should be the case with the "little church," or home. Where that is done, there really should be little difference between cottage or castle, between hut or manor house or palace. Any and all of these will then be in a special manner a church in miniature, God's blessing resting upon it.

The words used in this blessing are the same as those used in the prayer of the Asperges, which is held in Catholic churches before the main Sunday Mass. That is, they are a plea "that God may deign to send His holy angels from heaven to guard, to cherish and protect, to visit and defend all who dwell in it."

It is unfortunate that in this day of great mobility and lack of home ownership—and presumably, it must be added, owing to carelessness and indifference—this blessing of the house is frequently overlooked.

There are also two other blessings for the home beside the ordinary one given it before the Catholic family begins to live therein. One is a solemn blessing that may be given the homes of parishioners by pastors on Holy Saturday. This is given with a special type of holy water, namely, the so-called Easter water which is blessed on Holy Saturday. The other is a special blessing that may be given annually at Epiphany, or the feast, so-called, of the Three Wise Men. It is given in remembrance of the visit of the Three to the home of the Holy Family. With chalk blest at the Mass of the Feast, the following legend is written over the top of the door; 19-C-M-B-55. It is as much as to say: in the year 1955 may this house be blest in the name of the Three Wise Men, Casper, Melchior, and Baltassar.

Blessing of Evidences of Religion. Not only the house, but also the things within the dwelling are blessed. That is true, for instance,

of food, medicine, and kitchen or workshop. So, too, is it true of evidences of religion on the walls of the home—sacred pictures, statues or images, and crucifixes. These are blessed so that, as the words of the prayer of the blessing read, "those that behold them may be led to contemplate and imitate the lives and holiness of those depicted." Every Catholic home should have in it, as a minimum, pictures of the Holy Family, the Sacred Heart, and the Blessed Virgin.

Speaking yet of the blessing of the home and its various appurtenances, mention might be made of the fact that the Church even has a special blessing for the bridal chamber and for the parents' bedroom. Unfortunately, these blessings are largely neglected today. That would seem particularly to be regretted in view of the circumstances of the times. One might well conclude that where their influence would abide, there would not be found the unnatural vices that have become so prevalent in the modern world.

Blessings of Family Members. There are a number of blessings for the members of the family, notably for the child, the primary purpose of the family. There is a special blessing, for instance, for mother with child—for the pregnant mother. In it the Church prays, "that by the obstetric hand of Thy mercy her infant may happily see the light of day, and being reborn in holy baptism forever seek Thy ways and come to life everlasting."

The Parental Blessing. Special mention might well be made of the parental blessing, that is, of the blessing parents give their children. The newborn babe, for instance, should be blessed by them. So, too, should the infant be blessed by the parents after his spiritual rebirth in baptism. And this inspiring practice of parents blessing their children should thereafter be kept up as the latter advance in years under their care. They should bless them, for instance, when they retire in the evening, before they go out from the home into the dangers of the streets, and particularly when they go on any considerable journey.

In his booklet, *Bless Your Children,* Archabbot Ignatius Esser, O.S.B., writes that this parental blessing deserves to be called "the Sacramental of the Domestic Hearth." There is much evidence that the practice is rapidly coming into use again today. It should be particularly in place in young families. Simple as it is, it lends dignity to fatherhood and motherhood. It reminds both parents and children of the priestly office of parenthood. It cultivates mutual respect between parents and children.

3. Celebration of Religious Family Milestones

Among other means of making Catholic homes houses of God, or churches in miniature, is the practice of celebrating religious family milestones or anniversaries within the family circle. Especially in the case of younger married couples should such family celebrations present an inviting challenge. They should be a challenge to them to be different, to substitute for the flimsy and often false standards of the day genuine Christian standards grounded in centuries of Christian tradition and culture. Incidentally, such celebrations, over and above their spiritual values, present golden opportunities for strengthening family life.

Marriage Anniversaries. There are a considerable number of religious milestones that deserve to be celebrated—anniversaries of marriage and of baptism, First Communion days and patronal feast days, and the like. To be sure, some of these are more important than others. Certainly, since marriage is the basis of the family, wedding anniversaries are important, and should be celebrated. Hence the day on which the parents received the sacrament of matrimony, no matter what anniversary it may be, should be an occasion for rejoicing and celebration in the home. And, more so, should it definitely be a religious event in the Catholic home. Well might the family members attend Mass and receive Communion together as a group on that day. Again, the event might also be made an occasion for talking to the children about the sacrament of matrimony and the marriage ritual. An ever-increasing understanding of these from early childhood in the home would do much to give Catholic young people a true realization and appreciation of the great dignity of Christian marriage. It should also serve to develop in them a reverent attitude toward Christian parenthood.

The occasion of a wedding anniversary might also be used to put before children some thoughts about vocation, contrasting, for instance, the calling of the father and mother to the married state with that of the priesthood or religious life. The first seeds of a vocation are often planted through some simple instruction in the home.

Baptismal Anniversaries. There are the baptismal anniversaries of children of the family. These, too, are milestones of importance. In this country much is customarily made of the birthday anniversaries of children. But the anniversaries of their birth into the spiritual life through baptism must not be overlooked. An explanation of the symbols and ceremonies of the baptismal rite should be in place on

such an occasion. The family members might well all renew their baptismal vows together. Finally, the recitation of the Creed and the *Te Deum* or hymn "Holy God We Praise Thy Name," might fittingly be made a part of the program. The sponsors might be invited in for the occasion.

Daily Family Prayers in Common

Such special family celebrations as have been mentioned, and not a few others that could easily be added, might well serve as the seasoning for the regular spiritual family fare of the members. This fare should consist of morning and evening prayers in common, grace before and after meals, the recitation of the angelus, the rosary, and a variety of special devotions, such as prayers and hymns to the Blessed Virgin during the month of May or to the Sacred Heart during the month of June. Needless to say, such basic spiritual fare is most highly important. The religious life of the family would speedily grow weak without it.

4. Family Observances for the Liturgical Year

A particularly fitting way of making of the home a church in miniature and bringing about an awareness on the part of family members of the presence of God is by observing in it special religious practices or devotions that are adapted to the liturgical year. By the liturgical year is meant the sacred cycle of solemnities by which the Church celebrates the work of redemption wrought for us by Our Divine Savior. It consists of certain seasons of the Church year and certain feasts, such as those of Our Lord, His Blessed Mother and the Saints.

Just as the Church lives and breathes, so to speak, in the cycle of the liturgical year, so should the Christian family do likewise. Parents and children will do that by participating, insofar as possible as a family group, in the sacred mysteries as they are publicly and officially celebrated in the parish church. It is very encouraging in our day to note the growth of such practices in common as family assistance at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, family group Communion, and the family holy hour. But parents and children will also do so by special devotional practices in their own little church, the home. There are many such practices that are in harmony with the seasons and feasts of the church year. In the following we shall briefly describe a number of them.

The Advent Season

The liturgical year begins with the Advent season. Advent means "the coming." Beginning, not on January 1, as does the regular or chronological year, but on the fourth Sunday before Christmas and extending to the high feast of Christmas itself, this season is a time set aside for preparation for the coming, or advent, of our Lord on Christmas Day, just as Lent is a time of preparation for Easter or the feast of His Resurrection from the dead.

The Advent Wreath. One particular feature of this Advent season, suited to the home and rapidly coming into prominence again, is the Advent wreath. This wreath may be bought ready-made, or it may be made in the home. The latter is preferable. Commonly, it is made of pine branches and is suspended from the ceiling by means of four purple ribbons. It is adorned with four candles, one for each week of the Advent season.

The various features of the wreath have a special signifiance. Thus the round form of the wreath signifies the Church's holy cycle, the green signifies the divine freshness that comes to us by living with the Church's feasts and fasts, the purple bands suggest the graces that descend into our hearts during the Advent season of preparation for our Lord's coming, the light of the candle represents Christ, the Light of the World. Still other meanings are at times given these features. During the Advent season we prepare for His coming on Christmas Day.[1]

Putting Christ Into Christmas

At the close of the Advent season comes the feast of Christmas and Christmastide or the Christmas season. We frequently hear the expression today, "Put Christ back into Christmas." And there is every need for the saying. Not infrequently even is this true in the case

[1] A simple leaflet is available today for the blessing of the Advent wreath by the father as the members of the family gather around it on the Saturday before the first Sunday of Advent. It is entitled "The Advent Wreath" and is available at the Altar and Home Press, Conception Abbey, Conception, Mo., and the Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C., 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C. The collects of the Masses for the Sundays of Advent are also given in English on this leaflet. Hence they can conveniently be read as the candles of the wreath are lighted for the various Advent Sundays. One candle is lighted for the first Sunday, two for the second, three for the third, and all four for the fourth. The ceremony provides an impressive ritual. The children may well have some part in it.

of Catholic homes. The feast has been highly commercialized in our day. Its real purpose has been set aside by many. It has even been entirely forgotten by some. Gifts, greeting cards, celebrations—things that should help to create the atmosphere of a great Christian feast—are often altogether of a secular character. There is little or nothing to remind us of the Christ Child.

Needless to say, it is highly important that this situation be corrected and that a genuine Christmas spirit be made to pervade the home during this sacred season. Particularly should young people who are looking to the building of their homes bear this in mind and act on it. By giving the matter some serious thought, and perhaps reading some of the popular literature available on the subject, they can easily develop a true Christmas spirit in their daily lives during this holy season. To this end they should place emphasis on the crib rather than on the Christmas tree. There is, of course, no objection to the Christmas tree. But there is objection to putting all the emphasis on it and on Christmas gifts, and giving far less or no attention to the crib, as is not infrequently the case today. Here, too, is a place for candles. A large candle, burning before the crib, will remind all that the Christ Child, the Light of the World, is with us. From this candle, smaller ones, placed before the crib—one for each member of the family—are lighted. This signifies that from Him who is the "Light of the World" all "light" comes.

A Christmas Eve Ritual: A little religious ritual for the home on Christmas Eve is much in place. A very fitting one has been developed at Conception Abbey and disseminated throughout much of the country in leaflet form.[2] The following are some of its features: the family members having gathered around the Christmas tree, the father lights the tree and the candles at the crib. Together all then sing a verse of the hymn "Silent Night." Next the mother reads from the Roman Martyrology the announcement of the birth of Christ on the first Christmas.[3] On Christmas day the practice of reading the Lives of Saints for the date in connection with the Divine Office of the Church is omitted. In its stead there is a simple announcement of the birth

[2] It is entitled *A Christmas Eve Program for the Home* and is available both at the Alter and Home Press, Conception, Missouri, and at the Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C., 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.

[3] The Roman Martyrology is a volume containing lives of the saints which are read aloud or sung on their respective feast days at the recitation of the Divine Office of the Church.

of Our Lord. Following that, another verse of "Silent Night" is sung. Then, while all stand, the father reads the story of Christ's birth as told in the Gospel of St. Luke. This is followed by the recitation of the Creed by the entire family; following which, the mother reads the oration or prayer of the first Mass of the feast of Christmas. Finally all join in the singing of another appropriate hymn.

This family devotion may then fittingly be followed by the expression of the greetings and good wishes of the feast and the bestowal of gifts. In some places the gifts are not distributed until Christmas Day itself.

Other Feasts of Christmastide

There are a considerable number of outstanding feasts of the Church that immediately follow Christmas and that are particularly worthy of attention in the Catholic home. Among these are St. John's Day, Holy Innocents, Epiphany, the Holy Family, and Candlemas.[4] By way of example we add a few words about the first and last of these.

St. John's Day. This feast of the beloved disciple of Our Lord comes two days after Christmas and is celebrated with a special ritual among some of the peoples of Europe. There are also a few parishes in this country in which it is celebrated. The observance in his honor in the home takes on the semblance of a little love feast for the family members. The ritual commonly observed is the following very simple one. Wine will have been blessed "in honor of St. John" after the day's Mass and taken to the home. Before the evening meal the father fills the loving cup, or goblet, with it and passes it from member to member with the greeting: "Drink the love of St. John, the Apostle. And where charity is and love, there is God." It is very obviously a definite bid for Christian charity in the family circle.

Incidentally, these latter words, "where charity is and love, there is God," come from the opening line of one of the most beautiful hymns of the Holy Week liturgy. It is referred to as *Ubi Caritas* (where charity is) after the two opening words of the Latin version. It is used in places as a wedding song, and is also an excellent prayer for

[4] Ways and means of observing these and others in a fitting way can be found in such publications as *Your Home, A Church in Miniature I*, and *How to Make Your House a Home,* Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C., 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.

family members. It is particularly popular among the Catholics of Germany. The following is an English translation of the hymn:

Where charity and love are, there is God.
The love of Christ brings us together as one.
Rejoice, and be glad in Him.
Let us fear and love the living God.
Let us love one another from the depths of our hearts.

Where charity and love are, there is God.
Therefore when we are together
Let us take heed not to be divided in mind.
Let there be an end to bitterness and quarrels,
and end to strife,
And in our midst be Christ our God.

Where charity and love are, there is God.
And in company with the blessed, may we see
Thy face, Christ our God, in glory.
Pure and unbounded joy
For ever and ever, without end.
Amen.

Candlemas Day. What has come to be known in the Church as Candlemas Day falls on the feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It has special significance for the family. The particular feature of the feast is the blessing of candles for use in the church and home. Here, as always, the candle represents Christ, the Light of the World. In this country the custom that has been observed by most families has been that of securing two or three blessed candles on Candlemas Day and keeping them in the home for use in the event of a sick call. That particular use is important, of course, but there are many other uses to which blessed candles can be put in the home. Happily these are coming into their own among us again. Thus they are being burned in the home, not only on Candlemas Day itself but also on other particularly noteworthy feasts of the Church. They are being burned on the home altar or shrine during family devotions. Or, again, they are being burned as the Christ-candle in the center of the dinner table on Sundays or special feast days, or on special occasions such as name days and anniversaries of marriages or baptismal days of family members.

In Germany one finds the following custom in vogue. On the evening of Candlemas Day every member of the family lights his new candle for the recitation of the joyful mysteries of the Rosary before

the crib. These are the mysteries that remind us of Christ's coming upon this earth. Then the father cuts from the Christmas tree the branches, still laden with gifts and decorations, and distributes them to the children. This serves, as it were, to bring to a close the Christmas season.

The Lenten Season

The Lenten season soon follows in the Church's liturgical year. It, too, offers many opportunities for religious practices suited to the home and family life. In a more special way is this true of Holy Week, the closing week of Lent.

Shrove Tuesday. Even the day preceding the opening of the penitential season, commonly known as Shrove Tuesday, can be celebrated in a special way. Thus it may properly be marked by some special innocent merriment on the part of the family members before they enter upon the solemn penitential season of fast and abstinence. It need not be recommended, of course, that one imitate the garish ways in which it has come to be celebrated by many today. Its observance can be kept definitely Catholic in tone. After all, Shrove Tuesday is Catholic in origin. Very fittingly at the close of the day might the family members recite together the prayer which is said by the Church after the bestowal of the blessed ashes on Wednesday. As its words indicate, it is a prayer for grace in inaugurating the holy season of self-denial and other good works.

During the lenten season more than the usual amount of spiritual reading should be done in the home. There should be a cutting down of entertainment and other types of pleasure on the part of family members. Family prayer should be increased. Both prayers and hymns suited to the Lenten season should be brought into use.

Holy Week

The Church's liturgy for Holy Week is unusually rich. That should hardly be surprising, portraying as it does such outstanding events of the Church year as the institution of the Blessed Sacrament, the Passion and death of our Divine Savior, and His Resurrection from the dead. Family members should attend the church services as far as possible during this time. But here, too, there are observances suited to the home. These should not be overlooked.

Holy Thursday. One of these is a little ritual for Holy Thursday, the day on which is celebrated the institution of the Blessed Sacrament. This particular observance might well be called a symbolic Last

Supper. Maria Augusta Trapp has briefly described it as it is carried out among Austrian Catholics. The members of the family appear at the table in their Sunday best. Buns and cups of wine will have been put at the father's place at the head of the table. Before beginning the meal the father takes a bun, breaks it and makes the sign of the cross over it, then hands it, together with a portion of wine, to the mother. The others are similarly served. Following this, the father reads the Gospel story of the Last Supper, while all the others quietly and reverently eat and drink in Christ's memory.

The Oblatky. The Slovak people have a similar observance, with much the same meaning, for Christmas Eve. It is known as the *oblatky.* After a day of rigorous fasting in observing the vigil of Christmas, the family partakes of an elaborate meal, usually prepared in accordance with a special menu. Just before the meal is begun, the so-called *oblatky* is served. The term comes from a Latin word, *oblatio,* and refers to the bread used for the offertory and consecration of the Mass. It is in the form of a large oval-shaped wafer, and is meant to remind us of "the bread that came down from Heaven" or Christ's coming upon this earth on the first Christmas night.

The wafers are blessed by the pastor of the parish and distributed to parishioners, one for every member of the family. The father commonly serves the *oblatky.* He takes a wafer, puts a little honey on it, and hands it to the mother. Then, in turn, each of the other members of the family is served. The honey that is added is meant to signify the goodness of God. When all have been served, they quietly consume the wafer "in remembrance of the bread that came down from heaven."

Easter

On Easter, too, there are observances suited to the home. In preparing for the festive Easter Sunday meal, effort may well be centered in decorating Easter eggs with pictures of an Easter Lamb, the Risen Savior, the Blessed Mother, and different patron saints of the family.

In Catholic countries the food for the Easter table will have been blessed by the pastor preceding the morning Mass.

Among other things, Easter is the Church's great baptismal day. The baptismal water is blessed on Holy Saturday. In the early Church this was then used for the baptism of the catechumens. If the children have their baptismal candles these might be placed on the table at the main meal on Easter. Very fittingly, too, might all the family

members renew their baptismal vows together.[5] Such practices deserve to be promoted in this country.

Pentecost

Between the feasts of the Ascension of our Lord into heaven and Pentecost, the family may properly include novena prayers in honor of the Holy Spirit in their evening devotions, begging Him to come, with His sevenfold gifts, and sanctify the members of the family. Many beautiful prayers for such a novena can be found in the Mass texts of the vigil of Pentecost, the feast itself, and the octave of Pentecost.

Other Feasts

There are still other feasts, occurring during the cycle of the liturgical year that are deserving of special attention in the home. Such are feasts of the Blessed Virgin. Preparation for all such can be made in the family circle by reading and discussing the Mass texts of the feasts the evening before. This also would be a very fitting way in which to prepare for the Sundays of the year. Such a practice, incidentally, would help assure reasonable attention and devotion at the Sunday Mass—something that could hardly be expected if one spent Saturday evening and much of the night at an entertainment place, as is only too often the practice today.

Spiritual Renewal of Family Life

The matter of at least an occasional spiritual renewal of one's family life is of very real importance. Couples looking toward marriage should keep this in mind and put it into practice faithfully from the very beginning of their marriage. In connection with this subject mention might well be made of the family retreat and the renewal of the marriage vows together with the recitation of the pledge to Christian marriage.

The Family Retreat. As is generally known, it has long been customary in the Church for priests and religious to make an annual retreat. The religious exercises that constitute this practice serve as an excellent spiritual refresher. They renew and revitalize the spiritual lives of the retreatants. In view of the recognized value of the practice, it is not surprising that lay people also are more and more availing themselves of the opportunities provided them for making an occasional

[5] Some suggest this practice be observed on Holy Saturday evening.

retreat. Insofar as husbands and wives are concerned, it is very fitting that they should at least occasionally attend such spiritual exercises together. This is now possible with the promotion of the so-called family retreat. This type of retreat is adapted to the spouses' peculiar needs. It enables them to renew their spiritual lives together. It focuses their attention on the spiritual basis of married life, on the divinely ordained purposes of the family, on the rights and duties of husbands and wives, and the privileges and the obligations of fathers and mothers. It presents to them for meditation the deep spiritual meaning of marriage, the virtues that can and ought to be practiced, day by day, within the family circle, the religious customs that are particularly suited to the home. It is a medium through which the special way to sanctity through Christian family living is convincingly brought to their attention. Happily, these family retreats have for some time been enjoying a rapid growth. They offer much promise for the consistent renewal and the future betterment of Catholic family life.

Renewal of Marriage Vows. Members of religious orders from time to time renew the vows they made on the day of their religious profession. This is recognized as a very wholesome practice. It provides a simple opportunity to renew their life in religion. In like manner, husbands and wives might well renew their marriage promises occasionally. This would encourage them to give attention anew to the spiritual aspects of their wedded and family life. Actually this method of renewal has become quite common practice over the past few decades. It is customary to observe it at the end of family retreats. So, too, has it become a regular feature of family holy hours now extensively held in our churches. The renewal may also take place privately in the home from time to time. Fitting occasions for it might be the anniversary of the wedding of the spouses or the feast of the Holy Family.

The recitation of the "Pledge to Christian Marriage" is also in the nature of a renewal. It consists in recalling the main principles of Chritsian marriage and family life and renewing one's resolution to live in harmony with them.[6] This pledge may be recited privately or in connection with family retreats, family holy hours, or other religious services.

[6] Copies of the pledge in leaflet form or in the booklet, *The Family Holy Hour*, are available from the Family Life Bureau, N.C.W.C., 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W., Washington 5, D. C.

The various practices, to which attention has been given in the foregoing can hardly all be expected to be suited to every type of Catholic family. A sufficient number, however, have been mentioned to make possible a satisfactory selection for any and every home. There are, in addition to those indicated, a great number of other customs. For such as may desire information regarding them, the set of three booklets of the Family Life Bureau of the National Catholic Welfare Conference, *Your Home, A Church in Miniature*, Volumes I, II, and III, and other publications of the same agency are recommended. It might be added that potential adaptations of these practices are practically without limit. Hence there should be no difficulty in finding plenty of them for any and every spiritual taste.

The foregoing suggests a field that young people looking toward marriage should diligently explore in advance of their wedding day. It is a field in which they will find in very great measure the answer to the debilitating secularism that has become so characteristic of many homes of our day. It is a field in which they will find effective means for making of their future homes churches in miniature, houses of God, schools for their children, fitting places in which to carry on the all-important task of their lives, the working out of their eternal salvation.

TEAR OFF ALONG DOTTED LINE

QUESTIONS

1. *What is the antidote for the secularized family life of the day?*

2. *Why can it be correctly said that parents are priests in their homes?*

3. *What were the three priestly functions of Christ? Why can it be said that the husband has these same functions in the home? Has the wife any priestly functions?*

4. *What joint priestly function on the part of husband and wife is indicated in the encyclical on the Mystical Body of Christ?*

5. *Name some priestly functions that are exclusively those of individuals who have received the sacrament of holy orders.*

6. *What term does St. John Chrysostom apply to the Christian home? What does St. Benedict call the home of his religious or monastic family?*

7. *Describe briefly the Christian home life of earlier times as recalled for us by Francis Aidan Cardinal Gasquet.*

8. *In what four major ways can we make of our homes churches in miniature?*

9. *Mention some religious expressions suited for use in the home.*

10. *What are sacramentals? Name some that are suited to the Catholic home and family.*

11. *Describe the special blessing given the Catholic home on the occasion of the Feast of Epiphany or Three Wise Men.*

12. *Mention some blessings for family members. What is the parental blessing and when should it be given?*

13. *Indicate some religious anniversaries or milestones that should be celebrated in the home. How might a marriage anniversary be suitably celebrated? how a baptismal anniversary?*

14. *Name some devotions in common that should be practiced daily in the home.*

15. *What is meant by the liturgical year?*

16. *Describe a particularly suitable way of observivng the Adent season in the home.*

17. *Why have Catholics in our day popularized the expression "Put Christ back into Christmas"?*

18. *Describe a suitable Christmas Eve ritual for the home.*

19. *How is the Feast of St. John celebrated in some Catholic homes of our day?*

20. *What are some ways of observing Candlemas Day in the home?*

21. *Describe the "Oblatky" of the Slovak people.*

22. *Can Shrove Tuesday be observed again in a way that is in harmony with Catholic tradition?*

23. *What are some religious practices that are particularly suited for the home at Easter?*

24. *How can the Catholic family prepare for the Feast of Pentecost?*

25. *Mention other feasts of the Church that might be observed with special religious practices in the family circle.*

26. *What are some of the main features of the family retreat?*

27. *At what times or on what occasions might the marriage promises suitably be renewed?*

NOTES